

Women's History Matters

*The Montana Historical Society's
Suffrage Centennial Project*



MONTANA WOMEN received the right to vote in 1914, six years before the passage of the Twentieth Amendment, which guaranteed women's suffrage nationwide. Women's History Matters is a Montana Historical Society yearlong initiative to recognize the 2014 centennial of suffrage by looking inclusively at women's history in Montana. Suffrage is part of this story but not exclusively so.

One of the joys of focusing on women's history is that it almost requires a redefinition of history beyond the political. There's nothing wrong with studying politics and famous political figures, and many historians have made good careers from doing so. Many others, however, have pushed back against this narrow definition of the field, insisting on the importance of telling the stories of ordinary people while looking closely at how individual lives intersect with broader historical



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, Plac 2005-4 A1.10

From bootleggers to members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, from Indian women preserving traditions to women's clubs promoting culture through establishing libraries, women—including this woman pictured in her victory garden in Helena in 1918—have all contributed to Montana's history.

events. Insiders sometimes call this trend, which began in the 1960s, the “not-so New Social History,” but whereas social history and its siblings—labor history, gender history, ethnic history, and the like—have become commonplace in the profession, the idea of expanding the story beyond famous people remains a novel idea to many nonhistorians. A decidedly non-scientific survey of educated Montanans revealed that most could not name even five women in Montana history—with almost everyone stalling out after Jeannette Rankin, Evelyn Cameron, and Sacagawea. But when encouraged to broaden their definition, stories would pour out—about great-grandmothers who homesteaded near Malta, widowed mothers who eked out a living in Butte, and aunts who served in the WAVES during World War II.

Women’s History Matters is wholeheartedly committed to exploring the diversity of women’s experiences in the Treasure State. This includes acknowledging individual agency while also recognizing that cultural expectations, economics, geography, and government policies shape women’s choices. At the same time, the project also celebrates

women as actors—from the bootleggers who found an opportunity during Prohibition to make good money from their cooking skills to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, who founded some of Montana’s first social institutions.

At the heart of the Women’s History Matters project is a website, montanawomenshistory.org, that features twice-weekly essays on women’s history. Readers are encouraged to subscribe to the site’s RSS feed. The website also features resources for teachers, researchers, and the general public—including suggestions for ways communities across Montana can celebrate during the anniversary year. Explore the website to find links to more than 130 full-text articles on women’s history from *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, information about historic places associated with women, lesson plans for classroom use, links to early twentieth-century Montana newspaper editorials advocating (or opposing) suffrage, and comprehensive bibliographies of articles and books about Montana women as well as ones listing unpublished material in the Montana Historical Society collection. —MK

Women’s Suffrage in Montana

The Long Campaign

ON NOVEMBER 3, 1914, Montana men went to the polls, where they voted 53 to 47 percent in favor of women’s suffrage. Along with Nevada, which also passed a suffrage amendment that year, Montana joined nine other western states in extending voting rights to nonnative women. (Indian women would have to wait until passage of the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act to gain the ballot.) Montana suffrage supporters rejoiced, and in 1916 they followed up their victory by electing Maggie Smith Hathaway (D) and Emma Ingalls (R) to the state legislature and Jeannette Rankin (R) to the U.S. Congress. In this seeming wave of feminism, May Trumper (R) also became the state superintendent of public instruction.

An air of inevitability surrounded the victory, but it had not come easily. Montana women’s rights advocates first proposed equal suffrage twenty-five years earlier at the 1889 state constitutional convention. Fergus County delegate Perry McAdow (R), husband of successful businesswoman and feminist Clara

McAdow, championed the cause. He even recruited longtime Massachusetts suffrage proponent Henry Blackwell to address the convention. Blackwell was an articulate orator, but he did not have the backing of a well-organized, grassroots movement. “There has never been a woman suffrage meeting held in Montana,” he lamented. Nevertheless, Blackwell hoped to convince the delegates to include constitutional language allowing the state legislature to grant suffrage to women through a simple majority vote of that body instead of requiring voters to approve a constitutional amendment. That proposal failed on a tie ballot.

Although the constitutional convention did not grant them equal suffrage, Montana women did retain the right to vote in school elections (first ceded to them by the 1887 territorial legislature). The new constitution also granted all tax-paying women the right to vote on questions concerning taxpayers. For Montana feminists, however, the goal was equality

in voting rights. It proved a difficult target. Suffrage clubs formed and disbanded as the movement lurched between periods of concentrated effort and years of “discouragement and apathy.” The state legislature voted on equal suffrage during almost every session between 1895 and 1911. Suffrage questions sometimes passed in the House but never by the required two-thirds—and never in the Senate. Without the two-thirds majority in both houses, the question could not be put to a vote of the people.

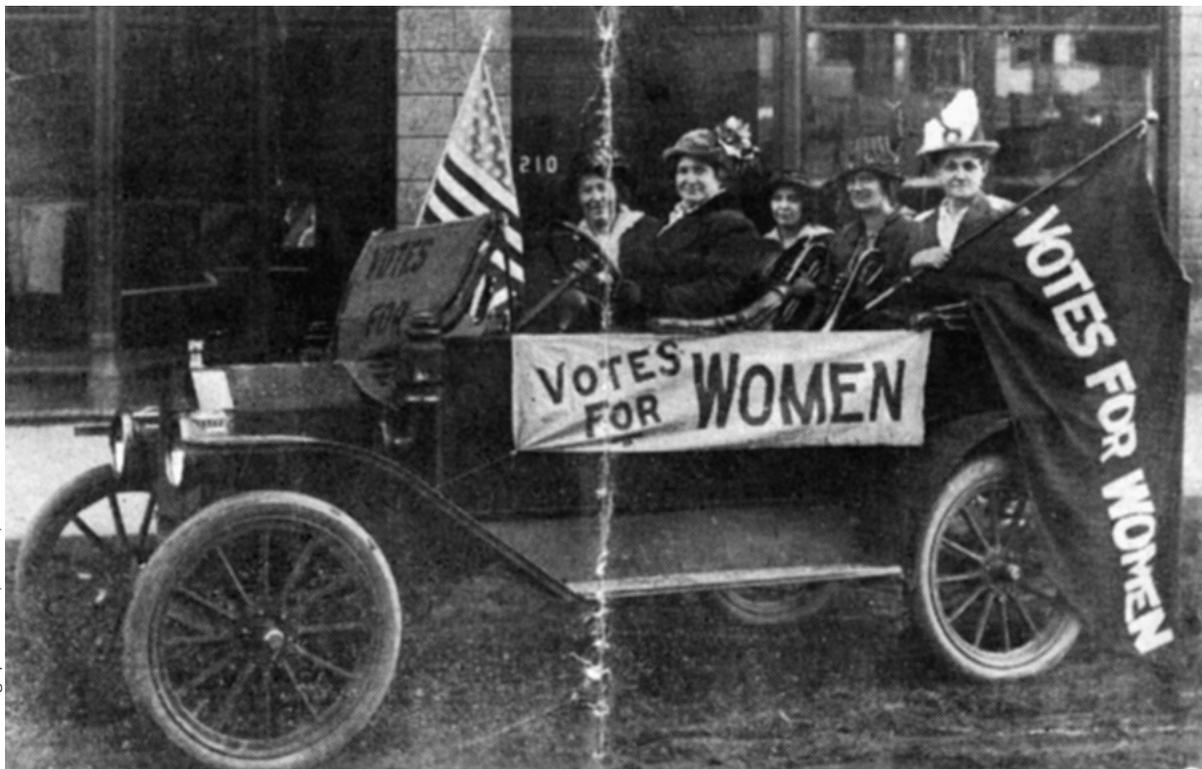
After the 1911 session, however, a sophisticated and multifaceted organizing campaign changed the momentum. The first step toward victory came when suffrage advocates convinced both the Democratic and Republican parties to write equal suffrage into their platforms. Then, in January 1913, the legislature passed a women’s suffrage bill by large majorities (26 to 2 in the Senate and 74 to 2 in the House). This left the 1914 popular vote as the last hurdle to amending the state constitution.

Jeannette Rankin is undoubtedly Montana’s most famous suffragist, but the movement’s final triumph

involved hundreds of women across the state. Belle Fligelman, of Helena, shocked her mother by speaking on street corners and in front of saloons. Margaret Smith Hathaway, of Stevensville, traveled over fifty-seven hundred miles promoting the cause and earning the nickname “the whirlwind.” The Missoula Teachers’ Suffrage Committee published and distributed thirty thousand copies of its leaflet, “Women Teachers of Montana Should Have the Vote.”

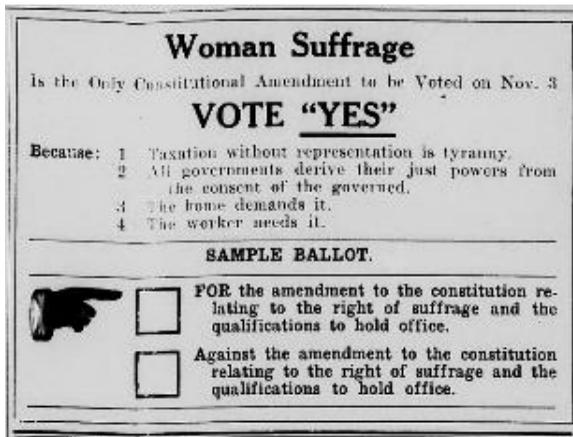
The campaign found arguments for every interest group, bringing in outside talent as necessary. New York laundry worker Margaret Hinchey proved particularly popular. The plainspoken Irish immigrant undoubtedly converted at least some of Montana’s class-conscious miners and loggers with her fiery speeches advocating equal suffrage as a tool for advancing the cause of workingwomen.

From its headquarters in Butte, the Montana Equal Suffrage Association (MESA) “mailed letters to women’s clubs, labor unions, granges, and other farm organizations, asking for pro-suffrage resolutions.” During the state fair, MESA published a daily paper,



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 951-821

On November 3, 1914, Montana men went to the polls and voted 53 to 47 percent in favor of women’s suffrage, ending an on-again-off-again campaign for equal suffrage that started in 1889. The *Suffrage Daily News*, the short-lived paper in which this photo ran on November 2, 1914, identified these suffrage campaigners only by their husband’s names while noting that the women had campaigned for the vote in four different Montana counties. Pictured left to right are Mrs. R. F. Foote, Mrs. J. B. Ellis (Silver Bow County chairman), Mrs. H. Salholm, Mrs. A. Obermyer, and Mrs. E. G. Clinch.



This advertisement appeared in the *Suffrage Daily News* on November 2, 1914, the day before the election. Its arguments in favor of women's suffrage (which were among the points made throughout the campaign) include "taxation without representation is tyranny," "all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," "the home demands it," and "the worker needs it."

underlining its dual argument for suffrage. The first was simple justice: "those who must obey the laws should have a voice in making them." The second asserted that women's ingrained morality would reduce political corruption and make it easier to pass humane legislation.

Women voters as a moral force was the prime argument of the state's oldest suffrage organization, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

The WCTU had more than fifteen hundred members and fifty chapters in Montana and ran its own suffrage campaign. State president Mary Alderson Long, of Bozeman, traveled forty-five hundred miles and effectively mobilized members to engage in neighbor-to-neighbor campaigns. Nevertheless, MESA did not allow WCTU members a float in its grand suffrage parade for fear of tarring the suffrage movement with the temperance brush.

The suffrage campaign emerged victorious despite such disagreements on tactics and the inevitable interpersonal rivalries. Ravalli County voted 70 percent in favor of equal voting rights; Missoula County, 64 percent; and Yellowstone County, 57 percent. The suffragists squeaked out a narrow victory in Hill County but lost Silver Bow (home to Butte) by a mere thirty-four votes. In general, farming counties supported suffrage, while mining counties opposed it—possibly out of fear that women would vote in Prohibition.

With the passage of equal suffrage on November 3, 1914, women had won the battle for justice. The promise that they would make politics more moral remained an open question. As the *Harlem Enterprise* editorialized after the votes were counted: "Evidently Montana has a better educated body of men who recognize the intelligence of their women. . . . Now we will see whether politics in the state will be more 'rotten' than under the control of men."¹—MK

Rose Gordon

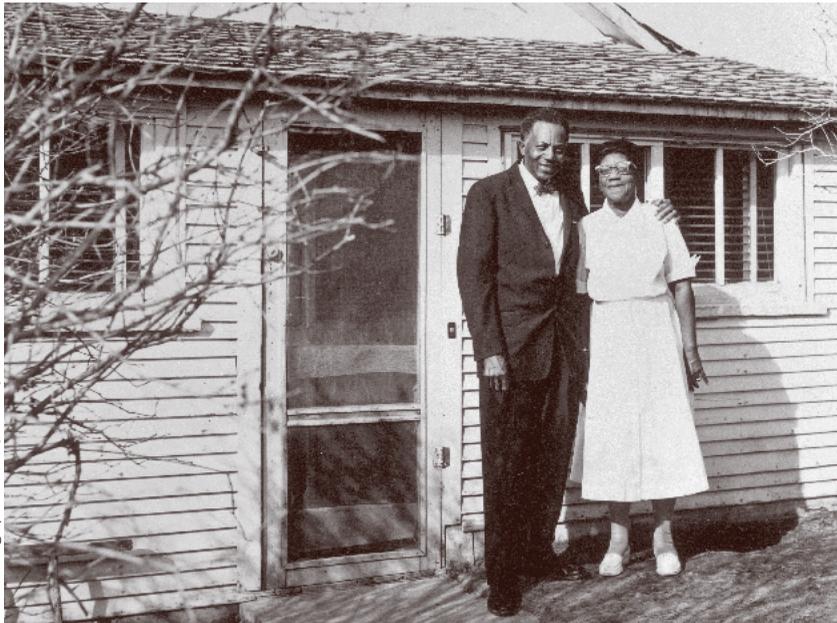
Daughter of a Slave and Small-Town Activist

ROSE GORDON was born in 1883 in White Sulphur Springs to a former slave and a black Scottish-born immigrant. Her commitment to service makes her life notable, while the grace and advocacy she showed in navigating the racist currents common to small-town Montana sheds light on the African American experience.

Rose's father, John, came to Montana Territory by steamboat in 1881 to cook on the mining frontier; her mother, Mary, followed a year later. The family purchased a home in White Sulphur Springs, Meagher County, where John worked as a chef for the town's primary hotel. At the time the family settled there, Meagher County was home to some

forty-six hundred people, including thirty African Americans.

In the 1890s, John Gordon was killed in a train accident, leaving Mary Gordon to support five children by cooking, doing laundry, and providing nursing care for area families. Despite the long hours she gave to helping her mother, Rose graduated from high school as valedictorian. Her graduation oration, "The Progress of the Negro Race," ended with praise for the African American educator Booker T. Washington, and Rose's life thereafter gave testimony to Washington's emphasis on self-improvement, self-reliance, education, and nonconfrontational relationships with white people.



Although never able to realize her aspiration to become a doctor, Rose Gordon sought medical training whenever she could and provided health care in the White Sulphur Springs community for more than two decades. She also recorded the history of her neighbors and participated in local activities and causes. Here, she poses with her brother, Taylor, a well-known New York City opera singer, in front of her White Sulphur Springs home in May 1960.

Rose Gordon aspired to be a doctor, but lacking the funds, she began nurse’s training in Helena. She soon returned home to assist her mother financially. She found employment as a domestic and as a hotel clerk in nearby Lewistown. In 1913, she tried a second time to pursue higher education, this time studying physiotherapy in Spokane, Washington, but as before, family responsibilities drew her home. Thereafter, Gordon continued to seek medical training whenever and wherever she could, though she spent most of her time making a living and helping family members, including her brother, Taylor Gordon, a well-known opera singer, after he returned to White Sulphur Springs.

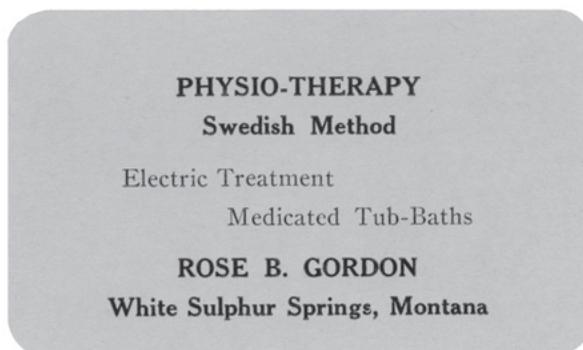
Gordon and her mother ran a restaurant and variety store in town until her mother’s death in 1924. Gordon continued the business through the hardest years of the Great Depression. From 1935 through the 1940s, she also worked as a seamstress for the Works Progress Administration and owned and ran a café.

Second to medicine, Gordon’s passion was writing. In the 1930s, she began her memoir, *Gone Are the Days*, in which she juxtaposed descriptions of her parents’ lives and her own with lively biographical portrayals of early Montana characters. For fifteen years, she unsuccessfully sought a publisher.

From the mid-1940s until her death in 1968, Gordon nursed elderly community residents in their homes, cared for newborns and their mothers, and provided multiple physical therapy treatments each

week—often coordinating her work with area physicians. She offered patients diet, exercise, and general medical and homeopathic advice and remained current in naturopathic equipment and thinking. In 1949, she received a diploma from the College of Swedish Massage in Chicago. When White Sulphur Springs acquired a bustling sawmill in the 1950s, Gordon treated workers referred and paid for by the state’s Industrial Accident Board.

Gordon also assumed the mantle of community historian, writing letters to the weekly *Meagher County News* on the death of many longtime residents. Each letter began, “I write to pay tribute to . . .,” and in them Gordon recalled the individual’s specific contributions to the community. By 1967, the *Meagher County News* was regularly publishing two separate columns by Gordon: “Centennial Notes” and “Rose Gordon’s Recollections.” In these, she presented significant portions of her still-unpublished autobiography.



MHS Museum, Helena, 1982.22.23. Gift of Emanuel Taylor Gordon Estate

A woman of many talents, Rose Gordon had several business cards made. This one advertises physiotherapy. Another advertised her chicken dinners.

Gordon belonged to the Meagher County Historical Association, the Montana Historical Society, the local hospital guild, the Grace Episcopal Church, and the Montana Federation of Negro Women's Clubs. Yet, despite her active role in the community, her attempt to participate in local politics was soundly rebuffed. In 1951, she ran for mayor, ignoring an anonymous letter that threatened the resignation of all other city council members and employees should she be elected. After losing to the incumbent, 207 votes to 58, she wrote to the newspaper reminding the community that as a local business owner she was entitled to file for office and that white and "colored" soldiers were both currently dying in Korea for, among other things, better race relations.

This was not Gordon's only public statement on race relations. On May 9, 1968, following the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, Gordon wrote a letter to the *Meagher County News* titled "The

Battle of Pigment." In it, she acknowledged the racism she had faced in her lifetime, the debt owed to black soldiers who were "baptized into full citizenship by their bloodshed," and her view that life was too short to focus on those who could not accept people of a different color. It was an eloquent summation of her life experience and her personal approach to racism.

Gordon died six months later. Montana senator Mike Mansfield joined hundreds in sending Taylor, her one surviving brother, letters and cards of condolence. Community leaders served as pallbearers at her funeral. The editor of the *Meagher County News* wrote a poem about the woman who had paid tribute to so many others. He also gave a full page to remembrances from community members, who described Gordon's unselfishness, compassion, wit, and curiosity; her talent for making and keeping friends; her great chicken dinners; and the courage with which she confronted racism.²—MSW & JF

Early Social Service Was Women's Work

PAROCHIAL INSTITUTIONS in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Montana, which were almost exclusively under the supervision of women, were the forerunners of our modern social services. Catholic nuns, Methodist deaconesses, and non-denominational Christian women offered comfort, sanctuary, and stability to the lost, the desperate, and the destitute. Their contributions were far-reaching, and some of their pioneering services evolved and remain viable today.

Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (Kansas) came to Helena in 1869 at the invitation of Jesuit priests who saw a dire need for feminine influence in the rough-and-tumble gold camp. The sisters' mission was threefold—to teach youth, to care for orphans, and to minister to the sick—and it fit in with the real needs of the frontier community. St. Vincent's Academy, the first boarding school for non-Indian girls, opened in 1870 and educated girls until 1935.

The sisters cared for the indigent mentally ill until the founding of Warm Springs in 1877. There was no other place for these people, and their care was a dangerous undertaking. On one occasion, a violent patient escaped his restraints and overpowered a hired man and a priest. Sister Patricia calmly threw a



Courtesy Independent Record, Helena, Montana

St. Joseph's Home for Orphans, founded in 1881, fulfilled one of the missions of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and was the territory's first orphanage. Earthquakes in 1935 left the children homeless, and they spent nearly two years as the guests of wealthy U.S. senator James E. Murray at Boulder Hot Springs.

mattress over the patient so that others could rush in and restrain him.

The Sisters of Charity also founded St. Joseph's Home, the territory's first orphanage. In 1881, the Sullivan brothers of Butte (ages three, five, and six) were the first of hundreds of needy children to enter their care. After the boys' mother died, their miner father could not care for them, so the sisters took the boys



In 1909, Methodist deaconesses from Chicago opened the Montana Deaconess Preparatory School in the Helena valley. Although the school was not an orphanage, the community perceived it as one, and the school took in orphans and children whose parents were unable to care for them. The school became Intermountain Children's Home, and it is now known simply as Intermountain. Above, the school's harmonica band poses with school principal Helen C. Piper (right) and volunteer A. I. "Daddy" Reeves (left) in 1929.

in and nurtured them. In time, Stephen and Ambrose would enter the priesthood and John would become a doctor.

Because Helena was the seat of the Catholic diocese, the largest population center, and the capital, many social service institutions were first located there, especially during the reform movements of the 1890s. Sisters of the House of the Good Shepherd arrived in 1889 to open a sanctuary and school for "fallen women and wayward girls." In 1896, members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union were among the founders of the Florence Crittenton Home, which complemented the work of Good Shepherd. Longtime matron Lena Cullum and the Crittenton board developed a close reciprocity with the Sisters of the House of the Good Shepherd, whose mission, although similar to that of the Crittenton Home, did not include the care of pregnant girls.

The Montana Children's Home Society, also

founded in Helena in 1896, was a Protestant non-denominational alternative to the Catholic St. Joseph's Home. Dr. Elizabeth Holden, who specialized in women's and children's health in private practice, gave her home for use as the first facility. The organization took in children from the orphan trains, babies up for adoption from the Crittenton Home, and other needy children.

Parochial education also evolved under the auspices of women in Montana, and it was often intertwined with social services. Various orders of Catholic sisters opened schools in many Montana communities, including Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings. By 1908, Catholic schools were serving 5,536 of the 61,928 children enrolled in Montana schools, not including reservations.

Protestants, concerned that there was no alternative private education, brought deaconesses from the Chicago Training School to open the Montana

Deaconess Preparatory School in the Helena valley in 1909. The school was the only Protestant boarding school west of the Mississippi. The school accepted children ages five to fourteen. The deaconesses were trained teachers and social workers. The school had many charity cases and sometimes took in Protestant children originally placed at St. Joseph's Home. Although the school was not an orphanage, the community perceived it as such. Consequently, donations helped sustain the school.

Networking among the women of these early institutions, established before child welfare systems and other social services were in place, speaks to the heart of those who strove to do the best they could for those under their care. Lila Schroeder Anderson serves as one example of a lost child who benefited greatly. Anderson was the third of six children of an eastern Montana rancher. In the 1920s, when her mother died and her father split up the family, she was the only sibling sent to the Deaconess Home at Helena. Soon thereafter, Crittenton Home matron Lena Cullum, en route to a meeting at the home, saw ten-year-old Anderson marching down the sidewalk with her belongings in a pillowcase. Cullum stopped and asked the child where she was headed. "I will find my broth-

ers somehow," Anderson recalled saying. Cullum then made arrangements with the deaconesses to take her in at the Crittenton Home. Although Anderson had an unconventional childhood at the maternity home, she went to public school, where she excelled. And Cullum gave her away when she married. The early matrons and mother superiors of these homes, whether Protestant or Catholic, commonly did life-saving work.

Child welfare services and the foster care system eventually replaced the early children's homes. Most Catholic institutions closed in the 1960s and 1970s, but some of these early institutions continue to serve needy Montanans. The Deaconess Home, now Intermountain, serves children who are under severe mental distress. The Florence Crittenton Home continues to accept unwed teens and focuses on parenting skills. The Children's Home Society evolved into Shodair Hospital, which provides genetic testing and psychiatric services.

The institutions that took root in Helena for the good of Montana residents speak to the caring groups and individuals who left important sustainable legacies. Their contributions have been monumental and their influence far-reaching.³—EB

Julia Ereaux Schultz

Health Advocate and Cultural Champion

BORN IN 1872 on the South Fork of the Sun River, Julia Ereaux was the daughter of a French immigrant, Lazare "Curley" Ereaux, and his A'a Ni Nin (White Clay—also known as Gros Ventre) wife, Pipe Woman. Julia, whose White Clay name was Sweet Pine, grew up in a bicultural family and was fluent in French, English, and Gros Ventre. She became a rancher and a newspaper correspondent, even as she served as a Fort Belknap tribal council member, promoted traditional indigenous arts, and worked to prevent the spread of tuberculosis on the reservation. A founding member of one of the first Indian women's clubs in

Montana, Schultz devoted her life to the well-being of the A'a Ni Nin people.

By the time Julia was born, her parents had already lost two children to a smallpox epidemic that took

Julia Schultz spent her life working to improve the health and welfare of the people of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. She also promoted traditional indigenous arts and, at age seventy, began a twenty-year career on the staff of the *Phillips County News*. Schultz lived to be 104. She is shown here celebrating her 100th birthday.



the lives of hundreds of American Indians in what is now north-central Montana. Along with several other mixed-heritage families, the Ereaux family settled near Augusta and took up farming. They were so poor, Julia later recalled, that her mother had to cut and thresh the grain by hand.

Julia received her schooling at St. Peter's Mission School, an Indian boarding school in the Sun River valley, which was attended by many Blackfeet and Métis children. Run by Ursuline nuns, the school also employed two famous Montanans during Julia's years there: Mary Fields, a former slave who worked as handyman and gardener for the school and who became Montana's first female postal carrier, and Louis Riel, one of the Métis leaders of the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.

After finishing her education, Julia helped her family build a ranch on her mother's allotment on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and assisted at St. Paul's Mission School, where her sisters were educated. Then, in 1890, she married German immigrant Al Schultz, and the couple moved with her parents to a ranch near Dodson.

Julia Schultz spent her life working to improve conditions on the Fort Belknap Reservation, particularly combating the spread of tuberculosis. From the 1880s through the 1950s, Montana's tribes experienced an extended epidemic of tuberculosis. The overcrowding in many Indian families' single-room cabins, combined with widespread malnutrition and lack of medical care on the reservations, created fertile ground for the disease.

With Montana's public health nurse, Henrietta Crockett, Schultz formed an Indian women's club at Fort Belknap, one of only two such clubs in the state in the 1920s, and through the club she spearheaded projects to educate tribal members about the causes and spread of TB. It was a cause she also champi-

oned during her three years on the tribal council in the mid-1930s.

Schultz also served on the Indian Welfare Committee of the Montana Federation of Woman's Clubs, seeking to bring statewide attention to the dire living conditions on the reservations. With members of the Crow Indian Women's Club, Schultz gathered information about the prevalence of tuberculosis on the reservations and then presented the data to the Montana State Tuberculosis Association. Henrietta Crockett and members of other Montana women's clubs joined the Indian clubwomen in lobbying for hospitals on the reservations, because the nearest hospitals were generally too far away to be of use to tribal members—and some hospitals did not admit Indians.

Schultz also shared the history and culture of the Gros Ventre people with non-Indians, particularly members of non-Indian women's clubs. In 1930, she won a national essay contest sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs for her essay on Gros Ventre history and culture. The essay ended with a reminder to Euro-Americans of the many kindnesses shown their ancestors by indigenous people and an impassioned plea for reciprocal compassion.

During the Great Depression, Schultz used her creativity and resourcefulness to help Indian families survive the hard times. She taught gardening and food-preservation techniques, possibly learned from Mary Fields at St. Peter's Mission, to women on the Fort Belknap Reservation, and she and other women collected the discarded army uniforms that were shipped in boxcars to the Indian reservations. They washed, repaired, and distributed the uniforms that were still in good condition; the remainder they recycled into wool quilts to be shared



MHS Museum, Helena, 1981.67.13. Bequest of Julia Schultz

In addition to her many other contributions, Schultz helped preserve traditional A'a Ni Nin (Gros Ventre) culture by bequeathing a large collection of artifacts to the Montana Historical Society Museum, including this circa 1920 wool elk-tooth dress.

with families who needed them. Schultz said she once washed, dried, and mended an entire boxcar's worth of uniforms by herself, a task that must have taken weeks.

From 1936 until 1942, Schultz also led a Works Progress Administration program to revive traditional arts and crafts of the White Clay and Assiniboine tribes. The Indian Arts and Crafts Act, passed in 1934, inspired a renewed investment in the traditional artistic skills of indigenous people and created a market for authentic Indian-made products. At Fort Belknap, Schultz organized elderly women, who still retained the skills and knowledge of traditional designs, to

share this information with younger women. These efforts enabled the women to sell their creations—such as beadwork, quillwork, parfleche containers, and leather goods—for much-needed cash.

At age seventy, Schultz joined the reporting staff of the *Phillips County News*, where she worked for the next twenty years. During this time, she continued to advocate for tuberculosis education and improved medical services for Montana's Indian population, and to promote native arts and cultural preservation. Celebrated by Indians and non-Indians alike as a cultural and community leader, Julia Schultz lived to be 104 years old.⁴—LKF

Montana's Whiskey Women

Female Bootleggers during Prohibition

IN NOVEMBER 1916, Montana voters approved a referendum for the statewide prohibition of alcohol. Montana's influential and well-organized branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had led the effort to ban the manufacture and sale of liquor. The passage of the new law, which went into effect at the end of 1918, reflected the growing influence of

drinking. Historian Michael Malone pointed out that the "enforcement of the law in wide open and fun-loving Montana proved nearly impossible." Moreover, the state's remoteness and abundant supply of wheat created ideal conditions for a thriving bootlegging economy. Although we now imagine bootlegging as a masculine activity dominated by gun-toting gangsters, in fact many women were quick to cash in on the illegal liquor trade. Women around the state manufactured moonshine and operated "home speaks" and roadhouses to supplement the family income. Because it could be done at home in the kitchen, making "hooch" was an especially attractive industry for working-class women hoping to supplement their family incomes and for widows who could not easily work outside the home.

Given the strength of the drinking culture in Butte, it is perhaps unsurprising that female bootleggers thrived in that "wide open" mining town. When Butte voters opposed the Prohibition referendum in 1916, one dry advocate had explicitly criticized the city's women who, she scolded, wouldn't vote for prohibition "because you want to have beer on your own tables in your own homes."

Butte's female bootleggers included such diverse practitioners as Nora Gallagher, a widow who brewed in her kitchen so she could purchase Easter outfits for her five children, and eighty-year-old Lavinia Gilman, who was caught running a three-hundred-gallon still. Because many bootlegging operations



MHS Museum, Helena, 1987.43.01. Gift of Anna and George Zellick

Because it could be done at home in the kitchen, making "hooch" was an attractive industry for working-class women hoping to supplement the family income. Made of copper, rope, and wood, this circa 1920 bootlegger's still is in the Montana Historical Society's collection.

female reform in Montana. Not all Montana women supported temperance, however, and, ironically, for some women, the ban on liquor created new and lucrative—albeit illegal—economic opportunities.

Although Montanans were pioneers in the Prohibition movement, the law itself did little to curb

were family affairs, children often participated as well. Helen McGonagle Moriarity recalled her role in her mother's liquor trade, which was cleverly paired with her existing laundry business. Moriarity's mother, Mary Ann, washed for miners living in a boarding-house. As a teenager, Helen delivered booze hidden among the clean clothes for "fifty cents a pint and two dollars a gallon."

A woman did not have to live in one of Montana's urban areas to benefit from the underground liquor trade that Prohibition created. Female homesteaders, both married and single, supplemented their farm incomes with bootlegging. Bertie "Birdie" Brown, an African American woman from Missouri who homesteaded in eastern Fergus County, made home brew that locals described as the "best in the country." Tragically, Brown died from burns she received when her still exploded in 1933.

Perhaps the most fantastic story of a homesteading bootlegger is that of Josephine Doody, a former dance hall girl who brewed moonshine at her remote cabin on the southern edge of Glacier National Park. According to the legend, Doody's future husband, Dan, a ranger at the park, had met and fallen in love with Josephine after seeing her at a dance hall in the railroad town of McCarthyville. Wishing to rid her of her opium habit, Dan tied Josephine to his mule, took her to his homestead, and locked her up to break her

addiction. It worked. After Dan died in 1919, Doody remained at the homestead and became famous for her moonshine.

Researching Doody's life, author John Fraley found that the men working on the Great Northern Railway became her best patrons: "The train would stop at Doody siding, and each toot of the whistle would mean one gallon of moonshine. Josephine delivered it across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River in a small boat." Doody died of pneumonia in 1936, and since then, her legend has only grown. In 2009, a group of history buffs erected a headstone for her unmarked grave in Conrad. It reads, "Josephine Doody, October 16, 1853, January 16, 1936. The Bootleg Lady of Glacier Park."

The Twenty-First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified on December 5, 1933, repealed the Eighteenth Amendment and ended national Prohibition. Ironically, many of the same women who had first supported the "Great Experiment" now pushed for legalizing the sale of liquor because of the perceived increase in crime and public vice that accompanied Prohibition. For those women who had benefitted from bootlegging, however, the end of Prohibition spelled the end of a valuable economic opportunity. The resumption of legal channels for the manufacture and procurement of liquor meant less demand for their homemade hooch.⁵—AH

A "Witty, Gritty Little Bobcat of a Woman"

The Western Writings of Dorothy M. Johnson

DOROTHY M. JOHNSON was Montana's most successful writer of Western fiction. Born in Iowa in 1905, Johnson grew up in Whitefish, Montana. Her love of the West and nineteenth-century frontier history and folklore inspired her to write seventeen books, more than fifty short stories, and myriad magazine articles. On the basis of her publishing success and numerous awards, scholars Sue Mathews and Jim Healey have called Johnson the "dean of women writers of Western fiction."

Johnson's family moved to Montana in 1909 and settled in Whitefish in 1913. Johnson graduated from Whitefish High School in 1922 and studied premed at Montana State College (Bozeman) before transferring to Montana State University in Missoula. By the time

she graduated with a degree in English in 1928, she had already published her first poem.

After college, Johnson left Montana and worked as an editor in New York for several years. In 1950, she returned to Montana and became editor of the *Whitefish Pilot*. Three years later, she relocated to Missoula to teach at the university and to work for the Montana Press Association. She lived in Missoula until her death in 1983.

Ironically, many people who might not know Johnson's name are, nevertheless, familiar with her work. Three of her stories—"The Hanging Tree," "A Man Called Horse," and "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance"—were made into motion pictures. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, a 1949 John Ford



Dorothy Johnson spent most of her childhood in Whitefish. After a short stint on the East Coast, she returned to Montana, where she lived in Whitefish and Missoula. More people are familiar with Dorothy Johnson's work—which included such Western classics as *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*—than with the author herself. She is pictured here, circa 1953, second from left, at the Big Mountain Ski Resort in Whitefish, attending the Montana Library Association banquet.

film starring Jimmy Stewart and John Wayne, has the honor of being listed on the National Film Registry for its cultural significance to American cinema. Johnson recalled that she conceived of the story while questioning the western myth of manly bravado: “I asked myself, what if one of these big bold gunmen who are having the traditional walkdown is *not* fearless, and what if he can’t even shoot. Then what have you got?”

Johnson’s work modifies the formula of the strong, stoic western male. In her work, westerners (both male and female) are tough but not invincible. Speaking of the real westerners who inspired her characters, Johnson explained: “I think the people who headed West were a different kind of people. Somebody said in a long poem that the cowards never started and the weaklings fell by the way. That doesn’t mean that everyone who went West was noble, brave, courageous, and admirable because some of them were utter skunks, but they were strong, and I like strong people.”

Johnson focused on women’s stories as well as men’s. Women in Johnson’s stories tend to be strong and loyal. Scholar Sue Hart notes that love and sacrifice are common themes in Johnson’s work: “I believe in love,” Johnson says—and her finest characters reflect that belief.” Johnson also attempted

to incorporate the perspectives of Indian women. Her novel *Buffalo Woman* focuses on the story of Whirlwind, an Oglala Sioux woman living in the aftermath of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Johnson considered *Buffalo Woman* to be one of her best books, and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame honored the work with its prestigious Western Heritage Award.

In her later life, Johnson published several articles about her childhood in *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. Her nonfiction expresses her love of Montana and her sense of the West’s meaning. She described Whitefish as a “raw new town,” filled with opportunity thanks to the jobs created by the Great Northern Railroad. For the workers drawn to Whitefish, it was “the anteroom of paradise . . . the promised land, flowing with milk and honey. All they had to do to enjoy it was work.”

The hardworking men and women of Whitefish stood in contrast to the “rich people and Eastern dudes” she encountered in Glacier National Park. Interestingly, when she wrote of the social stratification she noticed among visitors to the park, she framed it in terms of an East-West divide: “We unrich Westerners were suspicious of the whole lot of them. We looked down on them because we thought they looked down on us. But they didn’t even *see* us, which made the situation even more irritating. Years later, when I lived in a big Eastern city, I learned not to see strangers. . . . But in the uncrowded West, in *my* country, it’s bad manners, and on the trail it’s proper to acknowledge the existence of other human beings and say hello.”

Above all, Johnson was a consummate westerner, and this helped her excel in a literary genre that tended to be associated with men. Johnson defended women’s ability to write Westerns: “After all, men who write about the Frontier West weren’t there either. We all get our historical background material from the same printed sources. An inclination to write about the frontier is not a sex-linked characteristic, like hair on the chest.” Although Johnson never grew hair on her chest, she was, according to one friend, a “witty, gritty little bobcat of a woman,” and her writings reflect her western spirit.⁶—AH

Minnie Two Shoes

American Indian Journalist

IN 2009, the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA) honored Minnie Eder Two Shoes of Fort Peck with an award for journalistic excellence. A cofounder of the association, Two Shoes was known for her journalistic integrity and her hallmark sense of humor. Two Shoes worked as a writer, an assistant editor, and a columnist for the *Wotanin Wowapi* of Poplar, Montana. She served as an editor for *Native Peoples*; as an editor, writer, and producer for *Aboriginal Voices*, a Canadian magazine and radio show; and as a contributor to *News from Indian Country*. As a journalist, she helped reinvestigate the 1975 murder of American Indian Movement (AIM) member Anna Mae Aquash. Throughout her career, Two Shoes blended humor with serious inquiry into matters affecting Indian Country.

Born Minnie Eder in Poplar in 1950, Two Shoes began her career in 1970 as an AIM publicist. Founded in 1968 as an advocacy organization for American Indian prisoners, AIM coordinated several highly publicized protests in the early 1970s, including the nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969–1971, the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C., in 1972, and the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973.

AIM's goal was to bring national attention to the political, economic, and social injustices facing American Indians, but the FBI considered AIM an

“agitator” organization. In an attempt to sabotage AIM, the FBI planted informants in the organization, fracturing the trust among its members. In early 1975, AIM leaders questioned Two Shoes about providing information to the FBI and exiled her, despite her claims of innocence. That summer, two male AIM leaders interrogated Two Shoes's friend, Anna Mae Aquash, at gunpoint. A Mi'kmaq from Canada and one of AIM's most dedicated participants, Aquash was murdered six months later.

In 1980, Two Shoes started a women's traditional society at Wolf Point and, in 1983, earned a B.A. in community development. She began contributing articles to the *Wotanin Wowapi*, then an all-women-run newspaper. From 1987 to 1990, she studied at the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri and continued writing for the *Wotanin Wowapi* through the 1990s.

Two Shoes's column “Red Road Home” reflected her ability to inject humor into almost any topic. A classic example is Two Shoes's story about getting pulled over by a gloved cop and asked to perform a sobriety test. “As I got out of the car, my mind was racing. WHAT IS a drunk test? . . . I thought it had something to do with blowing up a balloon, but was I ever wrong! It was like a college exam, with more than one section.” So startled was Two Shoes that she “forgot to tell Black Leather Glove Man about the bad



Seouoyah National Research Center, Little Rock, Arkansas

Minnie Two Shoes (standing, third from right) with fellow founders of the Native American Press Association (later renamed the Native American Journalists Association) on the campus of Penn State University in 1984

tires” that made it difficult to steer her dilapidated car, Rez Bomb. She passed the test—and ended her article with a jab at the economic disparities between reservation Indians and non-Indians living elsewhere, stating that she drove Rez Bomb “for the sake of recycling.” “That’s what I tell my kids when they ask why the cars on the reservation are older models. . . . We’re using up our cars all the way, like the old Indians did with the buffalo.”

A fellow journalist observed that Two Shoes “could stir emotion by pointing out society’s cruel injustices, but lampoon them in the next breath with her hilarious quips. It was her way of pushing people out of their comfort zones. . . . In the process, she provoked them to think about issues that mainstream America would rather ignore.” In addition to reporting on reservation poverty, Two Shoes wrote about safe houses for domestic violence victims, environmental contamination on reservations, and the high rates of cancer-related deaths among American Indian women.

Two Shoes was not afraid to speak against injustice wherever she found it. She criticized male AIM members who got drunk, slept around, and fathered children they did not raise. At a NAJA convention in the 1970s, she responded to a non-Indian’s feminist criticism that women in AIM let the men take all the credit for AIM’s accomplishments by asserting that anonymity enabled AIM women to carry out their work with less scrutiny from the FBI.

In fact, the FBI’s attempt to co-opt highly visible AIM women like Anna Mae Aquash made them

objects of suspicion. When Aquash, who led extensive community-building and educational efforts, was killed in late 1975, the FBI claimed she died of exposure. A second autopsy revealed that she had been shot in the head.

In the 1990s, Two Shoes played a crucial role in the NAJA’s reinvestigation of Aquash’s murder. Two Shoes contacted AIM participants she knew from the 1970s, reviewed FBI files, and helped piece together what happened in 1975. In 2004, two AIM members were tried and convicted of Aquash’s murder. Many former AIM activists, including Two Shoes, attributed Aquash’s death, ultimately, to the paranoia created by the FBI’s infiltration of AIM.

After the Aquash investigation, Two Shoes moved to Minneapolis, where she continued her journalism career and mentored younger native journalists. At the 2009 NAJA conference, she noted that when the association was first founded, it boasted only a handful of members; by its twenty-fifth year, there were nearly five hundred. “Part of what we said years ago was that we wanted to create journalists to take our places,” Two Shoes said. “And I’ve got some really tiny shoes to fill!”

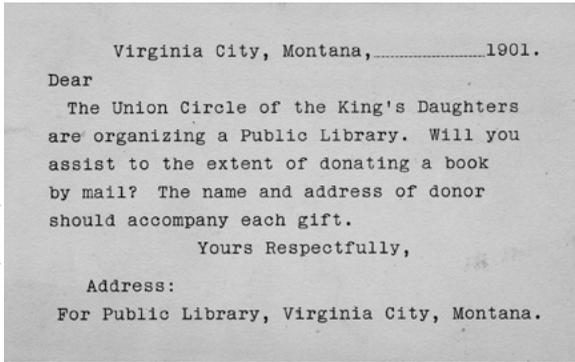
Using humor and her “rapier-like wit” to expose the often serious matters facing Indian Country was Two Shoes’s journalistic specialty. A year before she died of cancer in 2010, Two Shoes reflected on her twenty-five-year career: “[As] journalists we [are] very special people, and we have a very serious responsibility, but that doesn’t mean we can’t have fun along the way!” And she did.⁷—LKF

Progressive Reform and Women’s Advocacy for Public Libraries in Montana

THE HAMILTON WOMAN’S CLUB’S instrumental role in the library’s construction is not an isolated case. During the Progressive Era, women’s voluntary organizations frequently led community efforts to build public libraries. In 1933, the American Library Association estimated that three-quarters of the country’s public libraries “owed their creation to women.” More recently, scholars Kay Ann Cassell and Kathleen Weibel have argued that “women’s organizations may well have been as influential in the development of public libraries as Andrew Carnegie,” whose name

is carved into thousands of library transoms across the United States.

Since the time of white settlement, Montanans seem to have been unusually passionate about books and libraries. In an 1877 edition of the *Butte Miner*, one writer noted: “The need for a library was felt here last winter, when aside from dancing there was no amusement whatever to help pass the long, dreary evenings. Dancing, in moderation, will do very well, but it is generally allowed to have been somewhat overdone last winter. . . . [T]his library scheme . . .



Women’s voluntary organizations frequently led community efforts to build public libraries. The groups’ members considered libraries to be educational institutions. Linking education to self-improvement, they believed libraries could be a key to “breaking the cycle of poverty.” This postcard represents a 1901 direct mail solicitation on behalf of organizing the Virginia City Public Library.

will furnish a means of recreation . . . that is more intellectual and more to be desired in every respect.”

Rising to the call, women’s clubs founded libraries in communities across Montana. Most of these libraries started small: club members donated books, and a local milliner, dressmaker, or hotelier would offer shelf space. As the library (and the community) grew, it often moved to a room in city hall before, finally, opening in a separate building. By 1896, Montana could boast seven public libraries with collections of one thousand volumes or more, and the State Federation of Women’s Clubs maintained a system of traveling libraries.

At the turn of the century, library advocates in Montana received a boost from the Carnegie library grant program, which made funds available for library buildings if communities could prove they would provide a building site and tax support for the library’s ongoing operation. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, seventeen Montana communities built public libraries using Carnegie funds.

The history of Carnegie libraries has been well documented, and this focus has led library historians to emphasize the mayors and city council members who submitted the grant requests to the Carnegie Foundation. Although library historian Daniel Ring, for example, acknowledges women’s contributions, he also underestimates their significance. “At least 50 percent of the pre-Carnegie Montana libraries owed their founding to the civic-minded women,” according to Ring, and “when the Carnegie libraries came on the scene, it was usually women’s clubs that alerted the city’s power structure to the idea of obtaining a grant.” However, he emphasizes, “the women could not act alone. Without the support of the male business elite, they were powerless.” Thus, he delegitimizes women’s political activism.

Truly, both men and women worked to establish libraries. However, their motives for engaging in the effort typically differed. According to Ring, male politicians who promoted library development typically cared little about libraries as “educational institutions. Rather, the towns’ elites used the libraries as a mechanism to control the new settlers socially, to boost the



The Glacier Park Woman’s Club community hall (left, 2012) has served as the hub of social and cultural life in East Glacier for more than nine decades. Since its construction, it has housed the community library that the club first opened in the 1920s. Like their counterparts statewide, the women of East Glacier Park set up a library committee and worked to provide space, to acquire books—most often from their private collections—and to organize the books for community use. For a time, the library operated with a paid part-time librarian, but today it is open one evening each week, staffed entirely by volunteers. It serves as a branch of the Glacier County Library system.



Pictured here is Glacier Woman's Club member and library volunteer Berta Rink.

towns' fortunes, to exude a sense of permanence, and to bond the new-founded communities socially." By contrast, the clubwomen who founded public libraries had other intentions. Gender historian Anne Firor Scott concludes that "women's work for libraries was closely related to their work for public education." Members of women's voluntary associations linked education to self-improvement, and over the course

of the nineteenth century, they increasingly viewed access to education as a key to "breaking the cycle of poverty."

Like many scholars of women's history, Scott recognizes that "historians, looking at the past, do not see all that is there." Until recently, historians have overlooked and underestimated women's contributions to library development—in Montana and elsewhere—as well as their work sustaining libraries after construction. Members of the Miles City Woman's Club, for example, made fund-raising for the town's Carnegie Library their "main objective" after the building was completed in 1902. And they were not alone. Today, East Glacier still relies on woman's club volunteers to staff its library.

Montana's clubwomen played a crucial role in community improvement and educational development in the early twentieth century. Putting women back at the center of the state's library history sheds light on their achievements and offers recognition that is long overdue.⁸—AH

Feminism Personified

Judy Smith and the Women's Movement

JUDY SMITH was a fixture in Montana's feminist community from her arrival in the state in 1973 until her death in 2013. Her four decades of activism in Missoula encapsulated the "second wave" of American feminism.

Like many of her contemporaries, Smith followed the "classic" trajectory from the student protest, civil rights, and anti-Vietnam War movements of the 1960s into the women's movement of the 1970s. While pursuing a PhD at the University of Texas, Smith joined a reproductive rights group. Because abortion was banned in the United States, she sometimes ferried desperate women over the border to Mexico to procure abortions. Knowing her actions were illegal, Smith consulted a local lawyer, Sarah Weddington. These informal conversations sparked the idea of challenging Texas's anti-abortion statutes, culminating in the landmark Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade*. From this success, Smith learned that "any action that you take . . . can build into something."

Smith brought her conviction that grassroots activism was the key to social change with her to Mis-

soula. As she later characterized her approach, she simply looked around her adopted hometown and demanded: "What do women need here? Let's get it going. Get it done."

Smith's first step was to revitalize the University of Montana's struggling feminist organization. In addi-



Before moving to Missoula in 1973, Judy Smith was active in the feminist movement in Texas. She poses here with her mother at the first Texas statewide women's reproductive rights conference at the University of Texas Student Union in Austin in 1971.

tion to finding new space and obtaining increased funding for the Women's Resource Center (WRC), Smith expanded the group's activities to include weekly films, brown bag discussions, and hands-on workshops. The WRC's newsletter circulated throughout Montana, fostering a statewide feminist network.

Smith forged links between local activists and the national movement. With UM graduate and WRC member Diane Sands, she initiated an annual women's conference, bringing nationally renowned feminists to Missoula and encouraging Montanans to imagine a "feminist future."

Smith educated and empowered generations of women. Using her academic credentials, she attained faculty affiliate status and taught women's studies courses—off the books and open to all—for over a decade, introducing hundreds of college students and community members to "Feminism 101." Smith also shared her knowledge of grassroots organizing and her grant-writing skills with future activists.

For Smith, who identified herself as a radical feminist, grassroots activism was always "steeped in feminist theory." "Feminism to me isn't just about women, it's also about oppression," she maintained. "Women are a class and they're oppressed in certain ways and power is the issue. It's not enough just to provide services[;] even though that's important, it doesn't ask the fundamental question of why is the situation the way it is, and what can you do about that situation. . . . It's a systems analysis as well as a service analysis."

Bringing together university students and community activists, Smith established new feminist organizations, most notably Blue Mountain Women's Clinic, which provided a full range of health care, including abortion, and Women's Place, a rape crisis center. Missoula's feminist organizations mirrored the national women's movement. As Smith acknowledged, "feminism . . . was always a national movement," even though much of the work occurred locally.

Usually spontaneously and almost simultaneously, women's groups addressing similar issues sprang up

around the country in the 1970s and 1980s. They also developed similar group dynamics, struggling to reconcile their ideological commitment to equality with real power differences.

An imposing figure who stood six feet tall, Smith inspired many but intimidated others. Her forceful personality ran counter to the prevailing philosophy of feminist collectivism. Smith "never belonged to a group she did not control," comments Sands. But unlike some second-wave feminists, she avoided "trashing" her colleagues. When conflict escalated, she simply moved on. She had "the courage to be innovative," reflects colleague Terry Kendrick, "to pick herself up the next day and get started on something else."



Diane Sands Papers, fldr 19, bx 2, series 1, K, Ross Toole Archives, University of Montana

Members of the Women's Resource Council, above, were the nucleus of feminist activism in Missoula in the 1970s and 1980s. Among other services, the organization provided free classes for women on everything from auto mechanics to assertiveness training.

Many second-wave feminist organizations were fraught with conflict. As early as 1978, the WRC membership registered "concern and confusion" about "power holders" whose "knowledge and skills" granted them unofficial authority and decision-making power in a group that prized "consensus" and "dialogue." By the mid-1980s, Missoula's feminists were bitterly divided.

Smith also confronted growing opposition from campus officials worried that the WRC's radio program on the UM station openly discussed both lesbianism and witchcraft. "She needed to find another institutional base," explains Sands. That

base was Women's Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD), which Smith created by writing a grant for a program that used welfare funding to provide higher education and vocational training to low-income women.

Under Smith's guidance, WORD became an incubator for new organizations. One of WORD's earliest projects, providing small grants for local businesses, later became the Montana Community Development Organization. HomeWORD, an affordable and sustainable housing program, also had its origins at WORD.

After these projects were launched, Smith turned her attention to public policy, dedicating the last decade of her life to promoting a living wage, affordable housing, and sustainable development through her work with Montana Women Vote, a voter-education group.

Smith was a visionary, with "an uncanny ability . . . to see what the next wave of the [women's] movement was going to be," marvels Kendrick. Smith herself attributed progress to collaboration, insisting, "the women's movement did this work."

Convinced that only collective action could create meaningful change, Smith encouraged young women to get involved. Only if successive generations of women engaged in political activism could feminism be what Smith called "a living tradition."

Smith lived the women's liberation mantra, "the personal is political." Despite occasional differences

with others, she also believed another second-wave maxim, "sisterhood is powerful." Judy Smith truly embodied second-wave feminism.⁹—AJ

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Eliza Wiley, photographer, Independent Record, Helena, Montana



Smith's activism spanned more than forty years. Pictured here speaking in the State Capitol rotunda on January 22, 2013, at an event marking the fortieth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*, Smith holds a 1970 photograph of herself engaged in reproductive rights counseling, taken by Alan Pogue, her coworker at the Texas underground newspaper *The Rag*.

ABBREVIATIONS used in the notes include Evelyn J. Cameron and Ewen S. Cameron Papers, 1893–1929, MC 226, MHS (Cameron Papers); Manuscript (MS); Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula (UM); Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena (MHS); Montana Moments blog: A Blog of Funny, Bizarre, and Interesting Episodes from Montana History, <http://ellenbaumler.blogspot.com> (Montana Moments); *Montana The Magazine of Western History (Montana)*; National Archives and Record Administration, Washington, DC (NARA); *New York Times (NYT)*; Vertical File (VF). Unless otherwise noted, all newspapers were published in Montana.

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