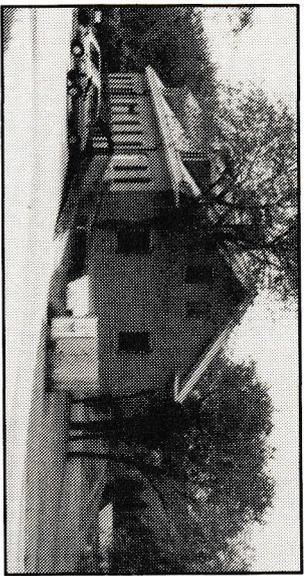


HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM  
*at*  
F·O·R·T  
MISSOULA



*Bicycle Corps at Minerva Terrace, Yellowstone Park, 1896.  
Cover photo courtesy of Montana Historical Society.*



Main Museum Building, built in 1911, originally the Quartermaster's Storehouse.

## THE MUSEUM

The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula was established in 1975 to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Missoula County and western Montana for the education, recreation and cultural enrichment of visitors and area residents. It is located on 32 acres at the core of Fort Missoula (1877-1947), an area included on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum has over 22,000 objects in its collection, including the main museum building, formerly a Quartermaster's Storehouse (1911).

The museum's indoor galleries contain both long-term and temporary exhibits that address topics from the area's early exploration to modern times. These exhibits, together with the museum's outdoor interpretive area -- a complex of original and relocated historic structures -- depict the life and material culture of the region. Major themes (Fort Missoula, Missoula County and the forest industry) are introduced in the main museum building and expanded upon in the outdoor interpretive area.

The museum site is open year-round and operated by professional staff and volunteers, including the Friends of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, who work to provide visitors with a unique opportunity to explore the region's history and learn more about its heritage.

## FORT MISSOULA

Fort Missoula was established as a permanent military post in 1877, in response to requests from local townspeople and settlers for protection in the

event of conflict with western Montana Indian tribes. It was intended as a major outpost for the region; however, area residents were also quite aware of the payroll, contracts and employment opportunities a fort would provide. Fort Missoula never had walls; rather, it was an "open fort," a design common for posts located west of the Mississippi. Open forts required troops to take the offensive and actively patrol the areas to which they were assigned.

Construction had barely begun when the Company Commander, Captain Charles Rawn, received orders to halt the advance of a group of non-treaty Nez Perce Indians, led by Chiefs Joseph, Looking Glass and others, who refused to settle on reservation land in Idaho. Pursued by General Oliver Howard, the Indians were traveling from Wallowa Valley, Oregon to seek refuge in Canada. The fort's soldiers were ordered to arrest and disarm the Nez Perce as they followed the Lolo Trail into Montana Territory; however, the Indians simply went around the soldier's hastily constructed earth and log barricade in Lolo Canyon (later called "Fort Fizzle"). They escaped south, through the Bitterroot Valley and into the Big Hole Valley, where they faced Rawn's men and others at the Battle of the Big Hole. The soldiers returned to Fort Missoula after the Nez Perce surrendered in October, where they continued with the fort's construction and maintained the Mullan Road.

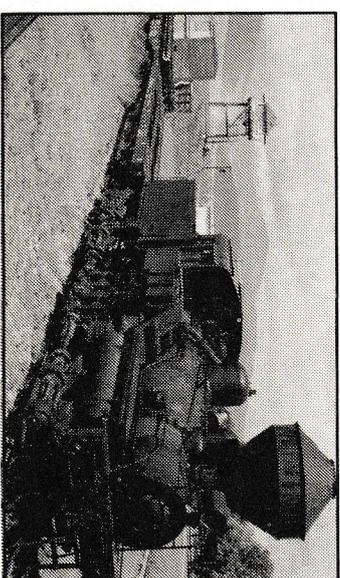
The 25th Infantry arrived at Fort Missoula in May 1888. The regiment was one of four created after the Civil War that were made up of black soldiers and white officers. In 1896, Lieutenant James Moss organized the 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps to test the military potential of bicycles. The corps undertook several short journeys -- through the Bitterroot Valley to deliver dispatches, north to the St. Ignatius area and through Yellowstone National Park -- before making a 1,900-mile bicycle trip from Fort Missoula to St. Louis. The Army concluded that while the bicycle offered limited military potential, it would never replace the horse. The 25th Infantry returned to Missoula by train. When the Spanish-American

War broke out in 1898, the 25th was one of the first units called to fight. The regiment served bravely in Cuba and the Philippines, but was reassigned to other posts after the war ended.

The efforts of Congressman Joseph Dixon of Missoula led to the appropriation of \$1 million in 1904 to remodel Fort Missoula. A modern complex of concrete buildings with red tile roofs was constructed between 1908 and 1914, including a new Officer's Row, barracks and Post Hospital.

The fort was used as a military training center during World War I, but was almost abandoned by 1921. However, it was designated as the Northwest Regional Headquarters for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933. Fort Missoula was transferred to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization in 1941, for use as an alien detention center for nonmilitary Italian men (merchant seamen, World's Fair employees and the crew of an Italian luxury liner). The camp housed over 1,200 Italian internees and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, 650 Japanese-American men.

Fort Missoula was used as a prison for personnel accused of military crimes, and other personnel awaiting court-martial following World War II. After the post was decommissioned in 1947, many of the buildings were sold, dismantled and removed from the site. Today, the majority of the fort is in the hands of nonmilitary agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Missoula County, U.S. Army Reserve, Montana National Guard, University of Montana and Northern Rockies Heritage Center.



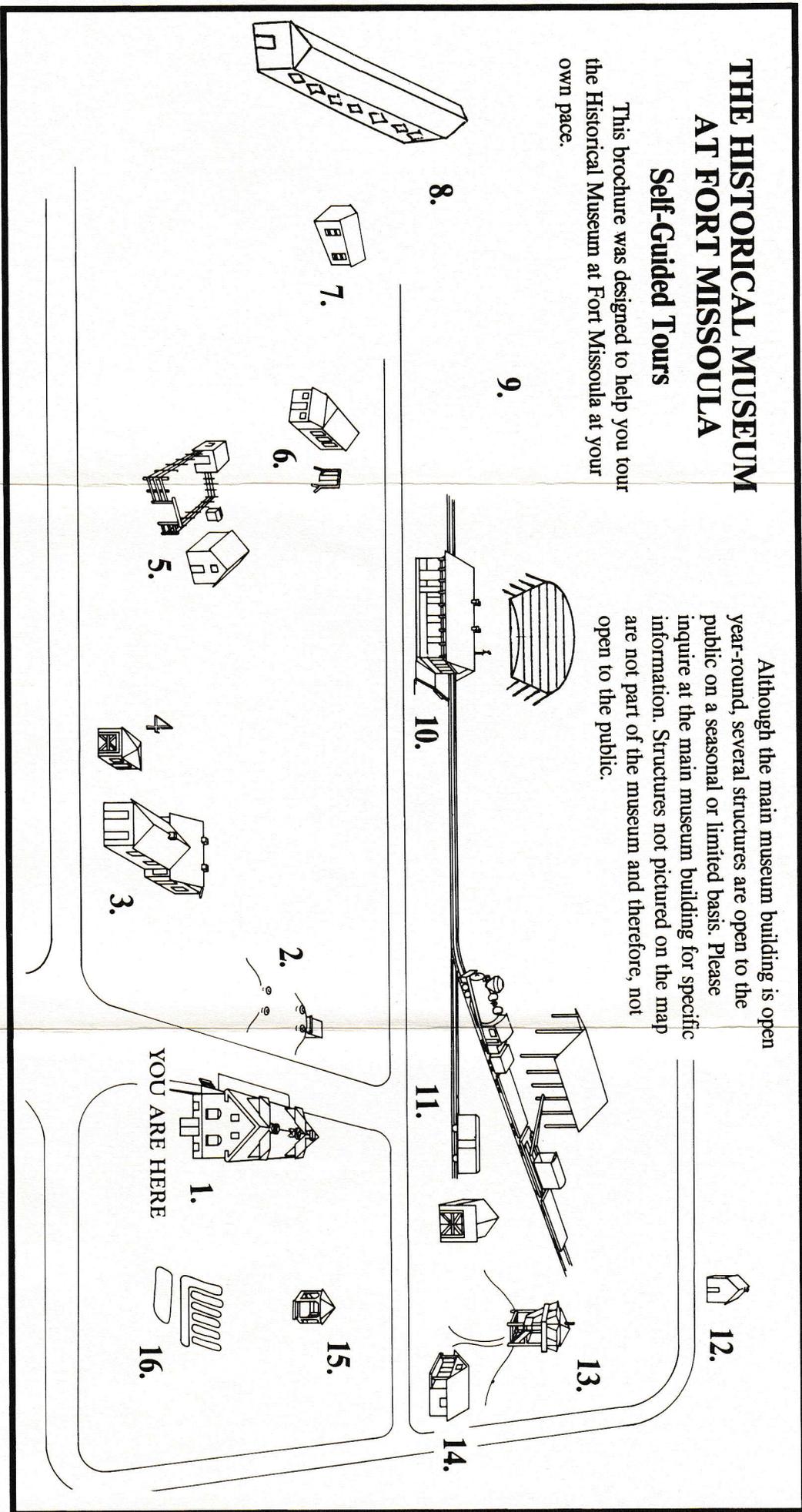
Shay-type Engine No. 7 was used on logging railroads near Missoula from 1923-1947.

# THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM AT FORT MISSOULA

## Self-Guided Tours

This brochure was designed to help you tour the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula at your own pace.

Although the main museum building is open year-round, several structures are open to the public on a seasonal or limited basis. Please inquire at the main museum building for specific information. Structures not pictured on the map are not part of the museum and therefore, not open to the public.



### 1. Main Museum Building, 1911\*

This brick structure once served as the Quartermaster's Storehouse, where a variety of post supplies were stored. The window bars protected the building's contents from theft. It has been remodeled and now houses exhibit galleries, a museum store, research library and offices.

### 2. Quartermaster's Root Cellar, 1908

This earth-covered concrete structure provided cool storage for large quantities of fresh vegetables and other perishables needed to feed the men stationed at the post. The metal vents on top allowed air to circulate and kept the cellar temperature constant

### 12. Powder Magazine, 1878

Constructed of mortar and fieldstones, this structure was used to store explosives when the post was active. It is one of three original Fort Missoula buildings, but is no longer used to store munitions. It is owned by the Northern Rockies Heritage Center.

### 13. Sliderock Lookout, 1933; moved to museum 1983\*

Manufactured in Columbia Falls, these prepackaged lookouts were shipped throughout a four-state region for assembly on a tower or bare ground. The single-room structures were grounded by a lightning

area's settlers. When an 1873 government survey disclosed that the Jesuits and a local farmer both claimed the same 40 acres of land, the church was moved by wagon to Missoula. It stood on the grounds of St. Patrick Hospital for many years before it was returned to the site of old Hell Gate in 1962. The Friends of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula moved the church to the museum grounds to interpret the history of the region's missionary movement. The exhibit, "The Black Robes," investigates the Jesuits' influence in the area.

### 8. Internment Camp Barracks,

### **3. NCO Quarters, 1878**

The oldest structure on the museum grounds, this log building is one of three original Fort Missoula buildings still standing. The duplex housed noncommissioned officers, civilian employees and regular Army personnel from 1877-1947. It passed into private ownership after 1947 and was being dismantled when it was discovered to be an original fort building. Today it is owned by the Western Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society.

### **4. Carriage House, 1880**

The carriage house was used to store a buggy and tack for families living in the NCO Quarters. It was sold and removed from the fort in 1958, but was returned to its original location in 1974. It is one of three original Fort Missoula buildings still standing.

### **5. Homestead Cabin and Barn, ca. 1900; moved to museum 1974**

Once located on 40 acres east of Missoula in the Potomac Valley, this cabin was a settler's home and according to legend, bootleggers! It is now being used for storage.

### **6. Grant Creek Schoolhouse, 1907; moved to museum 1976\***

This rural schoolhouse was once located north of Missoula in the lower Grant Creek drainage, a farming area it served until 1937. The structure was moved to its present location and restored to its 1920s appearance with the help of Eta Chapter, Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. It is used to interpret the history of the region's one-room schoolhouses.

### **7. St. Michael's Church, 1863; moved to museum 1981\***

Constructed at Hell Gate Ronde (about four miles west of Missoula) by Jesuits from St. Ignatius Mission, this church served the

ims structure is one of several wooden barracks constructed by Italian internees detained at Fort Missoula between 1941 and 1944. After the war's end, the building was moved to the University of Montana for use as a storage facility. An exhibit interprets Fort Missoula's internment camp.

### **9. Old Parade Ground, 1877-1910**

This field was used for flag ceremonies, drills and parades during Fort Missoula's early years. The old Officer's Row looked out onto the area. Larger concrete barracks and officers' quarters were constructed around a new parade ground between 1910 and 1914, when the fort was remodeled. This area is the site of an annual powwow.

### **10. Drummond Depot, 1910; moved to museum 1982\***

This depot was constructed by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company in the town of Drummond, about 60 miles southeast of Missoula. The Friends of the Historical Museum moved it to the museum after the railroad closed its Montana operations. It has been restored with assistance from the Missoula Model Railroad Club. An exhibit inside the depot, including the John Barrows Memorial Ticket Office, interprets the history of railroad transportation in western Montana. The Fort Missoula Amphitheater is located immediately south of the depot.

### **11. Forestry Interpretive Area\***

Forest management and timber production are interpreted in this outdoor area, with assistance from the local chapter of the Society of American Foresters and other volunteer groups. The area includes a re-created railroad logging spur, as well as a rare Shay-type engine, logging flat cars, a log-loading slide jammer, wagons and a sawmill. The "Timber" exhibit examines the early forest industry.

stove and cupboards. Lookouts replaced Forest Service guard cabins and were widely used until the mid-1970s, when prohibitive maintenance costs and improved electronic fire detection and communication systems made their large-scale use unnecessary. This lookout was dismantled at its site 40 miles southeast of Missoula, atop Sliderock Mountain. It was moved to the museum, reassembled and restored, with assistance from the Friends of the Historical Museum and the Missoula Chapter of the Society of American Foresters.

### **14. Miller Creek Guard Cabin, ca. 1910; moved to museum 1983\***

After the disastrous fires of 1910 destroyed three million acres of forestlands in western Montana and northern Idaho, the U.S. Forest Service became actively involved in fire prevention and control. "Fire Watchers" were posted throughout the region to watch for fires from lookout trees on mountaintops. The men first lived in "rag tent camps" and later, in permanent structures like this cabin, once located up Miller Creek, south of Missoula. After the Forest Service began using lookout towers, guard cabins became way stations for crews who maintained trails, repaired telephone lines and fought forest fires. The cabin is used to interpret the history of forest protection and fire management.

### **15. Gazebo, 1999**

This structure is a replica of an 1890's gazebo. It is used for special events on the museum grounds. It is available for rental for weddings and other private events.

### **16. Iris Test Gardens, 1983**

This area was established and is maintained by the Missoula Iris Society and used to familiarize visitors with the varieties and types of iris and other flowers that grow in this region.

\*Structure is restored with interpretive exhibits. Except when noted, open to the public on a seasonal basis (hours are posted on main museum building).