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### Montana high school students write articles for history magazine

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MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
WRITE ARTICLES FOR HISTORY MAGAZINE

MISSOULA--

Montana history can be read as a succession of eras--fur trading, mining, ranching, farming. Yet each era really is a succession of individual events and people; it is "local" history expanded.

In the Montana Historian Program, founded in 1970, Montana high school students are rummaging through the materials of "local" history and are writing articles about their findings. The articles are published in a little-known magazine called the "Montana Historian," which is printed three times a year.

The Montana Historian Program was begun by Dr. Robert L. Peterson, professor of history at the University of Montana, Missoula, under a Hill Family Foundation Grant. The grant funds have run out, but personnel at the University of Montana Library and the State Historical Society are attempting to continue the program by encouraging more high school students to participate by writing articles and selling subscriptions to the magazine.

According to Dale L. Johnson, UM Library archivist, the program works like this:

A high school teacher(not necessarily a history teacher) agrees to sponsor a Young Historian Club. Interested students meet after school or participate as part of a class. They research material about their town or its people, then write an article, complete with footnotes and bibliography, and submit the article to the Montana Historian Program at UM.

Articles prepared by students about their respective communities are checked by Johnson, who selects some for publication. Johnson sends the articles to the State Historical Society, Helena, where Vivian Paladin, editor of "Montana, The Magazine of Western History," selects pictures and puts the magazine layout together. The magazine is then printed at the University.

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"Little editing on each article is done," Johnson explained. "Minor corrections are made and facts are checked, but the style of the author is left alone."

What do students write about? In the latest issue, printed in February, a former Bozeman Senior High School student named Sandy Bailey explored the "golden years" of Pony, a southwestern Montana town which now has about 100 inhabitants.

In the same issue, Tim Bartz, a former student at Flathead High School, Kalispell, told the story of a man named Pomeroy, who built a wood castle--a strange two-story building at Bitterroot Lake in Northwestern Montana with "crazy angles, cupolas, turrets, floors at various levels and odd-shaped windows." Inside, the structure was a maze. Bartz said the building was never finished, and it burned down in 1909.

Some of the articles are about familiar historical events and people, such as the growth of major cities and discussions of "Copper King" Marcus Daly and the copper mining days, but many are written from interviews with people who have lived in a small town or who remember lesser known events.

In the fall 1972 issue, Phil Rostad, a former Helena High School student, wrote about Jeannette Rankin, a Montanan who was the first woman in the U.S. Congress. Rostad interviewed Ms. Rankin and found out she was as active at 92 as she had been in 1916, when she ran for Congress.

In the same issue, Gail Goodrich, a Bozeman Senior High School student, related the story of a Montana doctor, Caroline McGill. Dr. McGill, who died in 1959, practiced medicine in Butte and owned ranch properties in the Gallatin Valley. When Ms. Goodrich was about three years old, she explained in her article, Dr. McGill would take her for walks and tell her the names of the flowers and birds. Ms. Goodrich used personal recollection, old scrapbooks, manuscripts, newspaper clippings and letters to gather information for her article about the woman doctor.

Work done by the young historians often is part of a class project, but sometimes is "extra-curricular," Johnson said. Members of the Butte Young Historian Club not only write articles but sponsor activities and build floats for the annual Homecoming Parade sponsored by Butte Public High School.

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Sometimes a student who does not belong to a Montana Historian Club will submit an article for the magazine.

At this time only four towns have active clubs--Bozeman, Butte, Kalispell and Helena--and only the Butte club is an extra-curricular activity.

But Johnson and Ms. Paladin are trying to promote more interest. A contest has been established to encourage students to submit articles for publication. First prize is \$50 for this year's contest, which ends April 15.

Subscriptions to the Montana Historian may be obtained by writing to: Montana  
Mont.  
Historian Program, Department of History, University of Montana, Missoula, /59801. Regular  
subscriptions cost \$5 a year for three issues. Special \$3 subscriptions are available for  
school  
high/and elementary school students, schools and libraries.

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