



***Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board***

*A Certified Local Government (CLG)*

*Program representing four governing bodies:*

*City of Billings*

*Yellowstone County*

*City of Laurel*

*Crow Tribe*

**MEETING MINUTES**

**February 20, 2024**

**Miller Building 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room**

**2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North**

**Members Present** – Keith Edgerton, Zachary Garhart, Evan Bruce, Linda Lien, Becky Jeter and Ginger Aldrich

**Members Excused** – Brenna Moloney

**Members Absent** –

**Staff Present** – Dave Green, Kevin Kooistra,

**Others Present** – None

**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

**a.** President Edgerton opened the meeting. No public comment.

**2. Minutes** – The January minutes were accepted as presented.

**3. Old Business:** Discussion about the Eugene Carroll Award and the Best practices award were reviewed. Decisions were made about the two awards with proposed recipients. A motion and second were put forward for the nominees, the board voted unanimously to approve.

**4. New Business:**

Window Restoration Workshop. The workshop has been scheduled for April 13 at the Zimmerman Center in Pioneer Park. The workshop has space for 12-15 people. Board members are encouraged to participate with others able to participate to meet the maximum number allowed.

Brenna has created a flyer for the event and is working with the state on coordinating the event.

**5. Other Business:**

**a. Consultant Report:**

## **Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB) – February 20, 2024**

Kevin Kooistra - WHC Lead.

### **RESEARCH UPDATES**

Reviewing, writing, and submission of first draft of the Riverside Park, Laurel, nomination. Kooistra sent out to the SHPO in late January 2024. YHPB Project.

Kooistra to begin the National Register nomination for Chandler Cohagen multiple property nomination in late April (7 key properties near Pioneer Park and North Elevation). Target deadline is July 01, 2024. SHPO is supporting this project.

Lauren Hunley is leading the digital walking map project. She put in another 18 hours this past month – It will be completed by March 1, 2024. Most of the pieces are ready and Kooistra will bill out for efforts (separate SHPO project).

### **NEWS**

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual YHPB Historic Preservation Roundtable. Hosted on March 19 at 8:30 by the Art House Cinema & Pub at 109 North 30<sup>th</sup>. Mailing for Awards and announcements in January, 2024. Roundtable award applications sent out to over 30 businesses and non-profits.

### **LOCAL BUSINESSES AND HOME RESEARCH:**

- Working with Dave Wanzenried for Boothill Cemetery Project with research and brochure updates.
- Kevin did History of the Public Library in late January at the Library's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary week.
- Provided the Chamber of Commerce with historical information about the beginnings of the Chamber in January of 1907.
- Research of Bridger Memorial Park and Pathway through the Bible.
- Documented the basement of the Babcock Theater.
- Research for community group on the history of the 1806 William Clark signature on the rims and Pompeys Pillar.

**Note: *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories*  
opens at Western Heritage Center on April 9, 2024 - May 24, 2024.**

# LOCAL & STATE

The Source

Section C  
3 Monday, July 24, 2006

## 'Clark was here'? Signatures located all over area

By TOM HOWARD  
Of The Gazette Staff

A graffiti-scarred patch of sandstone on the Rimrocks bears an inscription similar to Capt. Pompeys Clark's famous signature at Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

Is it an artifact from the Lewis and Clark expedition? A Billings woman believes so. Doubters say it's a hoax concocted by somebody with a sense of humor and a passing knowledge of Montana history.

Whatever the truth, the city of Billings, which owns the property

where the inscription is located, has made an effort to protect it from weather and vandalism while attempts are made to determine its authenticity.

As at Pompeys Pillar, the inscription is carved in a looping cursive script with Clark's first name abbreviated "Wm." The date attached to the Billings inscription is July 24, 1806. The date would mean that Clark landed near the site of Billings, hiked nearly two miles to the top of the Rims, carved his signature, hiked back and traveled to Pompeys Pillar the next day.

Gene Blackwell, the city's interim director of parks and recreation, said he agreed to protect the rock inscription after a Billings woman, Wanda Larson, brought its existence to the city's attention about a year ago.

A padlocked concrete and steel cover is in place, and Blackwell said he issued a key to Larson, who said she has sent photographs to experts.

"I just told her if she could find a credible expert with an interest in taking a closer look to go ahead," Blackwell said.



A William Clark signature in an area of other graffiti is visible on the Rimrocks overlooking Billings. The site is near Kelly's Grave on Black Otter Trail and has been protected with a concrete cover. No one is certain if the signature is authentic or a copy of the one at Pompeys Pillar.

LARRY MAYER/Gazette Staff

Please see Signatures, 6C

Billings Gazette, July, 24 2006

**BANQUET IS BIG SUCCESS**

**Business Men to Form Chamber of Commerce.**

**FOR GREATER BILLINGS**

**Notable Gathering at Northern Hotel Last Night.**

Interest and enthusiasm marked the meeting last night of business men and citizens interested in the movement for a greater Billings. For nearly four hours the banquet rooms of the Northern hotel presented a scene that will be long remembered by those who participated, as it was a notable gathering and one that will undoubtedly result in splendid work being done in the near future.

The chief purpose of the banquet was to discuss the advisability of organizing a Chamber of Commerce. After considering the proposition from every point of view it was unanimously decided to proceed with the work outlined in the able presentation of the subject by P. B. Miles. The following motion of I. D. O'Connell was adopted:

Be it resolved, by the business men of Billings here assembled, January 19, 1907, that we organize a Chamber of Commerce; be it further Resolved, that a committee of seven

attend rows of tables extending east and west the entire length of the banquet hall. Stationed in a corner of the west room was an orchestra which discoursed sweet music during the progress of the affair.

Fully 100 were gathered at the festival board and they thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful spread provided by Landlord McNabb. The menu was all that could be desired.

C. C. Bove acted as toastmaster. After a few introductory remarks, in which he took occasion to express his appreciation for the honor of presiding at such a meeting, he called upon Mr. Miles, who offered the memorial to the legislature, already referred to. J. A. Gibby proved to be the poet of the occasion. He was introduced by the toastmaster and responded by reciting the following lines, which he introduced were ground out in a poetry machine:

... the banquet, given by ...

January 19, 1907 (Chamber Beginnings)

POMPEYS PILLAR

# POMPEYS PILLAR MARK RESTORED

## D. A. R. Starts Move to Deepen Capt. Clark Carving.

Through the initiative of the Billings members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a local landmark of historical value is being preserved. This landmark is the autograph of Captain William Clark, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, carved on Pompeys Pillar rock.

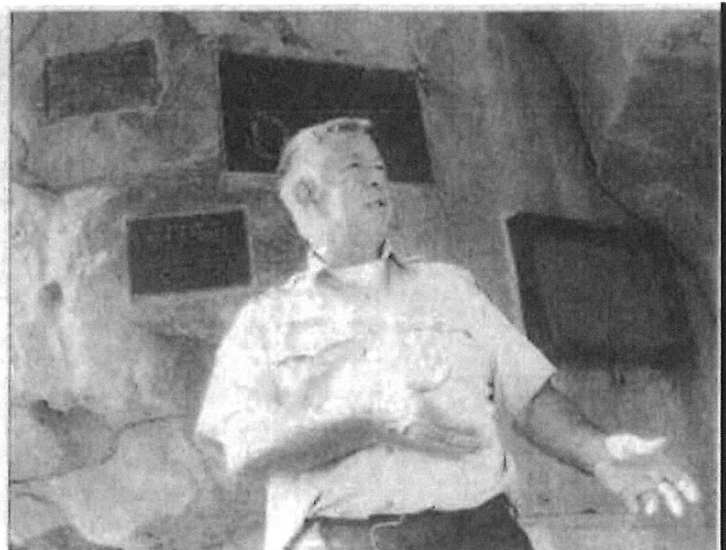
When the matter was brought to the attention of J. E. Spurling, district freight and passenger agent of the Northern Pacific Railroad company, he took the matter up with higher officials of the company, who, in turn, authorized the employing of Hazelton Brothers, of the Billings Marble and Granite Works, to cut the letters deeper.

When Captain Clark passed through this section of the country, on July 25, 1806, he climbed the rock and placed his name and the date on a flat piece of sandstone, about half-way from the top of the ledge. The historic value of this carving was early recognized by the officials of the Northern Pacific Railroad company, and they placed a heavy grating over the name to prevent its desecration by vandals. Due to weather conditions, however, the sandstone has been gradually wearing away and Clark's handwriting was in danger of being entirely obliterated.

So far as is known, "Pompeys Tower" as Clark called it in his journal, is the only place in Montana where he left any such inscription, and members of the D. A. R. felt that it was of the greatest importance that it be preserved.

The deepening of the letters has restored the inscription to its original state and it can now be easily read from the railroad tracks.

be N M t l o n O e r A: P: G: E: t l r e p w w i c e l o: n X f h a N W h e l c P R a t i s s c d e W P T a i a l P i c o G t k y



Dick Kunkel, director of the Pompeys Pillar Historical Center, stands near the signature of William Clark on the Pillar.

# Writing's on the wall

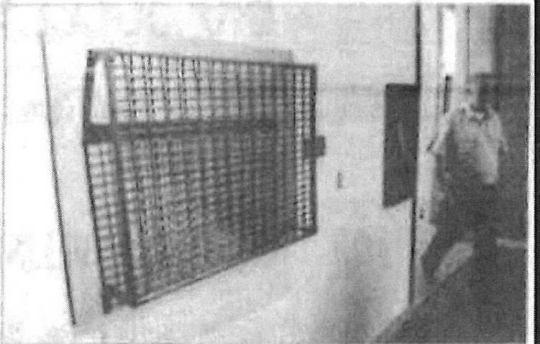
(Or is it?) Capt. Clark's signature restored on possibly 4 occasions

News by LOUISE BRADY  
Photos by JIMMY DRUMS

Inside the signature of William Clark etched into the sandstone of Pompeys Pillar National Monument, an inscription appears to be the original but not the original physical evidence, the one in one of the places along the route Lewis and Clark took when they first crossed the continent in the footsteps of William Clark and other members of the expedition.

The one is likely to challenge the second part of that statement, says Clark, who in his journal on July 25, 1806, the he carved his name and date on the "mountain top."

The first sentence, however, is not correct, says Capt. Clark's signature in stone and which might seem but only because it has been restored and deepened — or possibly re-carved — on at least three occasions and possibly more so.



Northern Pacific Railroad engineers installed this iron grille in 1902 to protect William Clark's signature on Pompeys Pillar. The grille stayed on the Pillar until 1966 when it was replaced with a grating of steel bars.

**'Narrowly obliterated'**

The signature later disappeared in 1902, says Dr. Brad, who says the weather and Clark's handwriting had become "narrowly obliterated" and 100 years ago another writer mentioned it as "one that is disappearing" from the history of the National Geographic Society who learned the Lewis and Clark trail down the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers in the 1870s, says Dr. Brad, who says the inscription was "narrowly obliterated" and "one that is disappearing" from the history of the National Geographic Society.

**Interesting story**

Phillips and his team were the first to see the signature in 1902. Phillips, who served a degree in history, says the signature was "narrowly obliterated" and "one that is disappearing" from the history of the National Geographic Society.

**Debating into history**

The signature and other marks on the rock face have been the subject of much debate among historians and geologists.

one pillar and Clark's signature on Pompeys Pillar was the result of the mountain's geological structure.

"It is a very interesting story and one that is being followed up by the National Geographic Society," says Dr. Brad, who says the signature was "narrowly obliterated" and "one that is disappearing" from the history of the National Geographic Society.

October 13, 1926, and September 3, 2006.

**b. Historic Preservation Officer Report** – The roundtable coming up, will need to get everything together for this event. Everyone was asked to please bring something to share.

Just another reminder about the April Window restoration at the Zimmerman Center in Pioneer Park. Will be sending out a reminder later in March to make certain people that would like to attend can sign up.

**c. Board Roundtable** – The board will not be having a formal meeting in April but will have the window repair workshop. On May 14, the Board will meet at the Western Heritage Center to see the exhibit and conduct the board meeting.

**a. Announcement: Next meeting March 19, 2024, Roundtable event at The Art House.**

Meeting was adjourned until March