

BELATED BIRTHDAY

The photo Published in the November 16, 1989 Pathfinder shows several of our young pioneers celebrating Montana's Centennial.

Five years later, Seeley's C.B. Rich and Ovando's Howard Copenhaver were key participants in the Montana Centennial Train

The Montana Centennial Train of 1964 has been called Montana's biggest publicity stunt.

Twenty-five railroad cars and more than 300 passengers who shelled out \$500 apiece to ride the train.

Thirty-one days of riding the rails through 18 states to Long Island, N.Y., and back.

Some 150 panels of massive Western murals, painted for the sides of the rail cars over a period of eight months by Lyman Rice and assistant Bud Wert.

A million dollars in gold, silver and other native gems for display to the world at the 18-month World's Fair.

"Free" publicity to the tune of an estimated 18,000 column inches of news copy, read by more than 17 million people, a TV audience of 37 million, and personal contacts with more than three million Americans through parades, luncheons, banquets, art and wildlife exhibits, etc.

"What started out as a one-man show has involved literally thousands who have contributed time and money to show their love, loyalty and respect for this broad, buxom Big Sky Country," wrote Howard Kelsey, the dude rancher and outfitter from Gallatin Gateway who was the instigator and became director of the Montana Centennial Train and World's Fair exhibit.

One Montana governor, Tim Babcock, was on board for parts of the trip and there were two future ones – Tom Judge, director of special events, and a 20-year-old Morstein (Martz), just back from the speed skating competition at the '64 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria.

Seventy-five horses and mules were along to step high and pull hard in parades at each of the 16 stops along the way, trained through the winter at the fairgrounds and around the streets of Missoula.

There were millions of memories and stories made, most that have improved with age, like fine wine or the Old Yellowstone whiskey that flowed freely on the train.

Oh, and one appearance on “Candid Camera,” with Allen Funt and Durwood Kirby.

That’s a Howie Fly tale. It had to do with salmonella, a railroad station restroom in Pittsburgh, TV cameras hidden behind a screen, and a bar of soap that turned out to be a very breakable egg.

Fly, of Ovando, was a high school classmate of Kitty Ann Quigley in Deer Lodge, a protégé of Copenhaver, and one of five wranglers for the horse and mule strings on the train.

Because they could, the cowpokes in the Montana party like Quigley and Fly walked the streets of Chicago and New York with six-shooters on their hips.

“I wore mine daily,” Taaler said.

“Mine were loaded, but I didn’t tell anybody,” Fly admitted.

Because he could, Montana-born trick roper and rider Owen Mickels, aka Montie Montana, rode the elevator and performed on stage at the banquet hall in New York’s Commodore Hotel on April 23 with Rex, his rubber-shoed paint horse.

Montana was the 41st state to be admitted into the Union on November 8, 1889.

For sixty years prior to establishment of the Territory of Montana in 1864, seven different territories of the western United States governed the area that was to become Montana. The portion of Montana located east of the Continental Divide belonged to Louisiana Territory (purchased from France in 1803), Missouri Territory (1812-1821), the so-called “Indian Country” (1821-1854), Nebraska Territory (1854-1861), and Dakota Territory (1861-1863).

The western portion acquired from Great Britain in 1846 belonged to Oregon (1848-1853) and Washington (1853-1863) Territories until the entire future state was included in Idaho Territory in 1863.