FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2020

Contact:
Melissa Jensen
Community Outreach Coordinator
The Montana History Foundation
(406) 449-3770

Author of Carnegie Libraries Book to Hold Lecture and Book Signing at Montana Book Co.

Kate Hampton, author of *The Best Gift: Montana’s Carnegie Libraries*, will hold a lecture and book signing at Montana Book Co. in Helena on **Wednesday, February 12th at 6:00 p.m.** The book profiles 17 libraries built in Montana with the help of financial contributions from Andrew Carnegie at the turn of the 20th century.

“Carnegie libraries played – and continue to play – an integral role in the cultural and educational life of their cities, towns, and counties,” says Hampton. “The story of their construction, and particularly the role of women in their establishment and use, was particularly compelling.”

Hampton is the Community Preservation Officer at the Montana Historical Society’s State Historic Preservation Office. She says writing the book gave her an opportunity to bridge the people of the past – who helped bring these libraries to their communities – with those who are working to continue carrying on their legacy for the next century.

“This project served as a wonderful opportunity to learn from and engage with great people, help convey the significance of these architectural treasures, and hopefully provide a vehicle by which we can work together to preserve them well into the future,” says Hampton.

The photography that accompanies Hampton’s storytelling is also a mixture of the past and the present. Architectural renderings and historical photographs take us back to their creation and the early days of Montana’s Carnegie libraries. Present day photographs are captured by Tom Ferris, who has been an archival photographer with the Montana Historical Society for more than two decades. Ferris hopes his photographs help show how the libraries continue providing for their communities today.

-continues-
“I hope they see the beauty in the buildings themselves, but also realize the functionality of the branches that still are libraries. It’s also good to see the other buildings being used and repurposed to serve the communities in other ways,” says Ferris.

The book is published by the Montana History Foundation. It is currently available for purchase at Montana Book Co., 331 N. Last Chance Gulch, in Helena. Hampton will speak there at **6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12th**, followed by a book signing with both Hampton and photographer Tom Ferris.

#####