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2016 Founders Day

# 175th Anniversary Commemoration

Saturday, September 24, 2016 • 9:00 a.m. Rain or Shine

Historic St. Mary's Mission • Stevensville, Montana

“Where Montana Began”

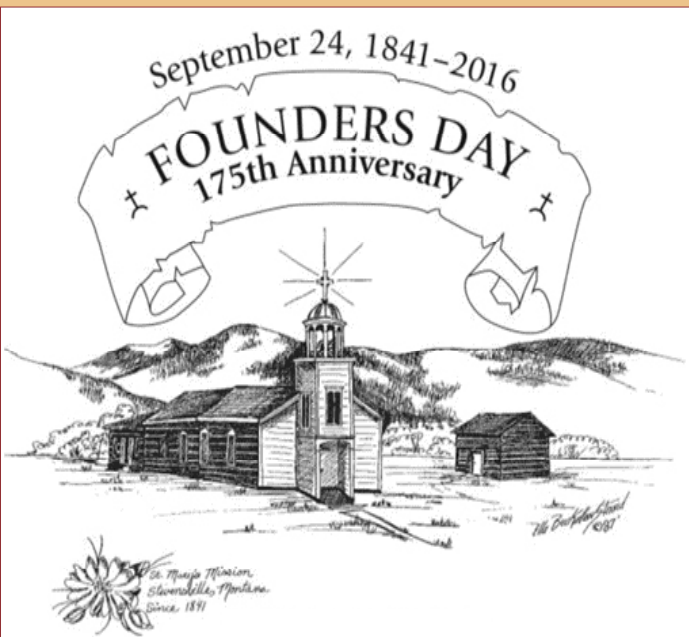
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September 24, 2016 marks the 175th anniversary of the date missionaries from St. Louis arrived in the Bitterroot Valley in response to repeated requests by Salish tribal leaders. The site of that historic meeting became Stevensville, the first pioneer settlement in the future state of Montana. Stevensville and the Salish are commemorating the date, in conjunction with the annual Montana Historical Society Conference, with a reenactment, exhibits, demonstrations, student events and other special activities.



2015 Reenactment.

Photo by Laurie Pelham, B in the Bitterroot Photography



## Founders Day Program

10 a.m. – Ringing of St. Mary's Chapel Bell

- Invocation: Bishop George Leo Thomas, Diocese of Helena
- Flag Ceremony:  
Salish Tribe, Stevensville FFA Chapter,  
American Legion Fort Owen Post #94
- Salish Smudge Ceremony: Steve Lozar
- Welcome and Greetings
- Reenactment of the Salish welcoming the Blackrobe Missionaries
- Dedication of the Salish Encampment
- “Friendships and Relationships” Ladies Tea
- Salish Comments
- Montana Historical Society Comments
- Guest Speakers

Lunch Served from 12-3 p.m. • Refreshments Available All Day

West end of 4th Street, Stevensville • 406-777-5734 • [www.saintmarysmission.org](http://www.saintmarysmission.org)

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# 175th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



**9:00 a.m.**

Exhibits Open  
Coffee, Tea and Pastries available  
Music: Bitterroot Community Band

**10:00 a.m.**

Program (details on front page)

**12-3:00 p.m.**

Lunch available  
Demonstrations and Exhibits

- Salish Drummers and Dancers
- Traveling Salish Exhibit – The People’s Center
- Salish Beading – Rachel Arlee Bowers
- Mountain Man Encampment – Bernie Rubio
- Flint Knapping – Don Safford
- Traditional Flax Spinning – Sylvia Talsma
- Branding Demonstration – Jay Meyer
- Wild Raptors – Raptors of the Rockies
- Bitterroot Wildlife – Stevensville Ranger District
- Wildfowl, Petting Pelts – Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge
- Salish Timeline – Marina Weatherly
- History Story Board – Stevensville Museum
- Pictorial Postmark – Stevensville Post Office
- Poster Contest Winners – Stevensville and Lone Rock Schools
- Time Capsule – Salish Tribe, St. Ignatius and Stevensville Students

Guided Tours at reduced rates



**3:00 p.m.**

Raffle Drawing and Conclusion of Founders Day Events

**5:00 p.m.**

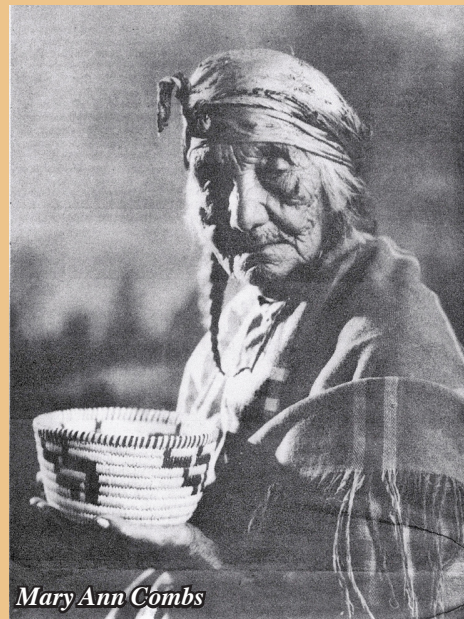
Celebration of Mass: Bishop George Leo Thomas and Fr. Matthew Huber



## “Friendships and Relationships” Ladies Tea

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Mary Ann Pierre was born in 1882 in Stevensville. Mary Ann was nine years old in October 1891, when American soldiers arrived to “escort” the Salish people out of the Bitterroot region and to the Jocko Indian Reservation. With her family and three hundred members of her tribe, Mary Ann tearfully left the homeland where her people had lived for millennia. The Salish left behind farms, log homes, and St. Mary’s Mission; evidence of all they had done to adjust to an Anglo-American lifestyle. While working for Indian Agent, Peter Ronan, Mary Ann married Louis Topsisseh Combs. Eighty years after the removal of her people Mary Ann returned to the Bitterroot to rekindle her people’s historical and cultural connections to their homeland.



*Mary Ann Combs*

Mary Ann and Stevensville resident Margaret Sullivan met in the Mission Valley and formed a close friendship. When Mary Ann returned to the Bitterroot Valley she stayed in the Sullivan home and the two women visited over a cup of tea. Margaret listened closely to Mary Ann’s family history and her memories of the trauma for her tribe and the forced removal to the Jocko Reservation. Mary Ann gave Margaret several handmade items which Margaret gifted to St. Mary’s Mission. The last of the “children of the Bitter Root,” Salish Indians who were born in their ancestral homeland, died in 1978.

Sharing tea and conversation during the Founders Day program are Rachel Arlee Bowers, the great granddaughter of Mary Ann Combs, and Francie Sullivan, the daughter of Margaret Sullivan.



*Margaret Sullivan*

# Friendships and Relationships Łqétmłš

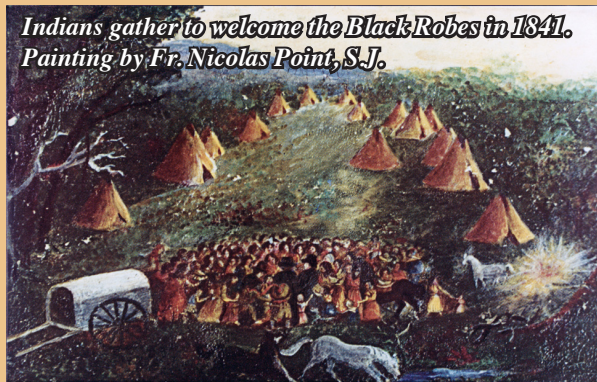
“The aboriginal lands of the Salish and Pend d’Oreille reached across all of western Montana and considerable ground east of the mountains, north into what is now Canada, west into northern Idaho and eastern Washington, and south into Wyoming. The five or six main bands of the Salish proper were based at winter camps spread between the Bitterroot Valley and Three Forks. For millennia, Salish-speaking peoples traveled this enormous area by foot and canoe, visiting and trading with each other, following a seasonal cycle of life and expertly gathering what we needed of the earth’s bounty; bitterroots, camas, buffalo, elk, deer, fish and berries. The Creator gave our people a rich land to care for and a varied and consequently stable supply of foods, medicines, necessary for a comfortable life.” Excerpt from *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition* by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

One of the rarest occurrences in American history took place when the Salish Indian Tribe, through the influence of the Iroquois Indians, actively recruited European Missionaries into their encampment to teach Christianity. The persistence of the Tribe required four arduous trips to St. Louis over a ten year period which led to the founding of St. Mary’s Mission on September 24, 1841 by Fr. Pierre DeSmet, S.J. The dif-

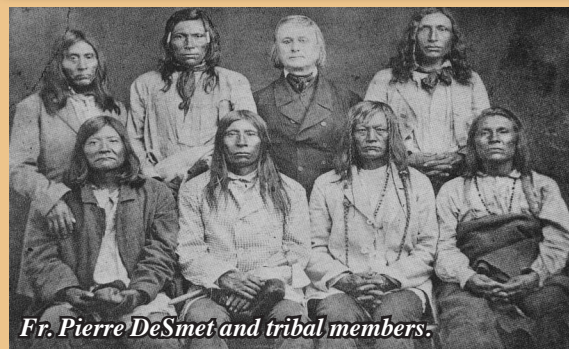


*St. Mary’s Mission diorama of Chief Big Face (left), Fr. Pierre DeSmet, S.J. and Chief Victor.*

ference between the two cultures was bridged by mutual respect and recognition of each others’ dignity. The Missionaries advocated the equality for the Indians, which became legendary among the Indian Tribes across the United States.



*Indians gather to welcome the Black Robes in 1841. Painting by Fr. Nicolas Point, S.J.*



*Fr. Pierre DeSmet and tribal members.*

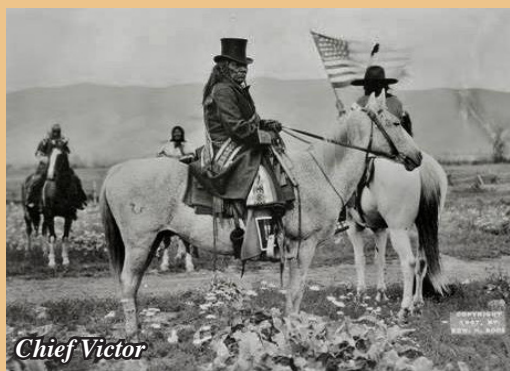
## Chief Big Face DOB unknown-1842

Tjolzhitsay was the Salish Chief who, at age 89, led the Indian delegation of 1,600 to Pierre’s Hole in present-day Idaho to meet Father DeSmet’s party in July of 1840. In his greeting, Chief Big Face said, “This

**Łqétmłš** – Salish-Pend d’Oreille placename for the Stevensville area. Translation: Wide Cottonwoods

day the Great Spirit has accomplished our wishes and our hearts are swelled with joy.

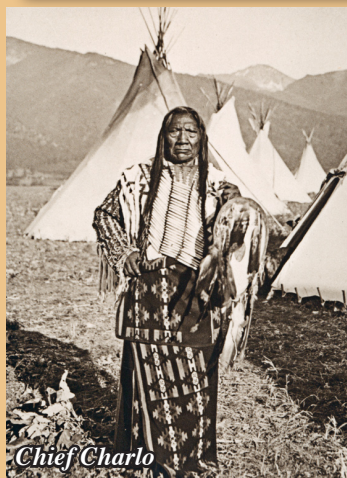
Now, Father, speak and we will comply with all that you will tell us. Show us the way we have to go to the home of the Great Spirit.”



*Chief Victor*

**Chief Victor 1805-1870**  
“Little Bear Claw” was among the first to be baptized by the Black Robe Missionaries and was a close and loyal friend to them. Victor succeeded Big Face as chief in 1842. Father DeSmet wrote that this good

chief walked faithfully in the footsteps of his predecessor, which was no slight praise. He was to reign with dignity in the face of many challenges for almost thirty years. Chief Victor was opposed to leaving the Bitter Root Valley, contending that under the Hell Gate Treaty of 1855 the valley was to be set aside for the Flathead Tribe.



*Chief Charlo*

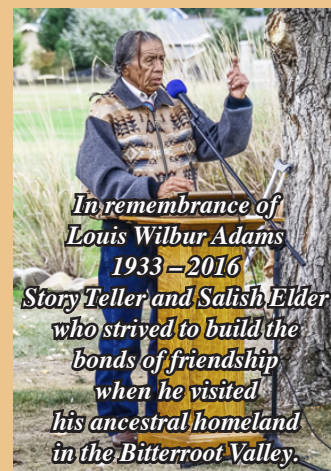
## Chief Charlo 1830-1910

“Little Grizzly Bear Claw” was the son of Victor upon whose death Charlo was elected chief. He fell heir, not only to the tribal leadership, but also to Victor’s struggle to retain tribal rights to their ancestral homeland, their dearly loved Bitter Root Valley. He adamantly refused to sign the Garfield Agreement of 1872 requiring the Flathead Tribe to move to the Jocko Reservation, because the U.S. government had failed for seventeen years to fulfill its obligations according to the Hell Gate Treaty of 1855.



*2013 Founders Day.*

*Photo by Cindy Crews.*



*In remembrance of Louis Wilbur Adams 1933 – 2016 Story Teller and Salish Elder who strived to build the bonds of friendship when he visited his ancestral homeland in the Bitterroot Valley.*

*Photo by RCS Photography.*

# Collectible Items Available at Founders Day Commemoration

**2016  
Founders Day  
Pictorial  
Postmark  
Envelopes**



**1989 Statehood Centennial  
Pictorial Postmark Envelopes**

**1941  
100th Anniversary  
Pins and Ribbons**



**2016  
175th Anniversary  
Buttons**



## Memorial and Honorarium Bricks Available Now

Two sizes are available to memorialize or honor your family, friends and loved ones. A 6x12 half brick is available for \$65 and a 12x12 brick for \$130. Customize your memorial brick and it will be seen as visitors view the Ox Cart Exhibit on the Mission grounds.



*All proceeds support Historic St. Mary's Mission.*

Historical information in this brochure from the following sources:

*"The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition"* by Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
*"St. Mary's in the Rocky Mountains"* by Lucylle H. Evans

## About St. Mary's Mission

St. Mary's Mission is a treasure, not just to Stevensville, Ravalli County and to Montana, but to our nation as well. It represents the first pioneer settlement in the state as well as the first church in the Northwest. It truly is "Where Montana Began."

Listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, St. Mary's Mission is a cultural and historical icon of the early days in the American West. The Mission speaks to guests of a time when life was much different. Chief Victor's Cabin brings a sense of the 19th century when the Indian and European cultures merged. Guests experience a reverent silence when stepping into the Salish Encampment. Visitors can feel the past meld with the present when visiting St. Mary's Chapel and Fr. Ravalli's Cabin and Pharmacy. By strolling the grounds, in the shadow of St. Mary's Peak, visitors allow the valley and all of its splendor to encompass them.



## About Historic St. Mary's Mission, Inc.

The purpose of Historic St. Mary's Mission, Inc. is to provide and promote a cross-cultural, trans-generational, educational experience for students, historians, travelers, and for our local communities. Historic St. Mary's Mission, Inc., a non-profit corporation, continually strives to strengthen ties with, and acknowledges its roots in, American Indian culture, and to improve the local economy through tourism, while preserving the area's delicate past for future generations.

**Contact Information:**  
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*Your tax-deductible contributions gratefully accepted.*

**Guided Tours**  
April 15 - October 15  
Tuesday - Friday 10 to 4  
Saturday 11 to 3

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