

## 24 Bonner History Roundtable: Bonner Homemakers

<https://youtu.be/yPj3gFZxFik?si=Yzl8JfTic3zZHB2Feb>. 15, 2015, at St. Ann Catholic Church in Bonner  
Jan. 16, 2017, at St. Ann Catholic Church in Bonner

*Glenn Max Smith (the Bonner Hooligan)*

(This program has been edited for clarity.)

(intro music playing with credits)

[00:00:57] **Minie Smith:** Hello. I want to welcome you all to the next Roundtable. (adjusts microphone)  
Anyway [I] want to welcome you all to the next series of the Roundtable sponsored by the Bonner Milltown  
History Center and Museum. And this presentation is being recorded by Missoula Community Access  
Television as part of a media assistance grant donated by MCAT. For more information, visit [mcat.org](http://mcat.org) and  
we're grateful to them for coming each time to record our programs. And thanks to Friends of Two Rivers for  
sponsoring the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum for this grant. And to MCAT for providing this  
important gift to preserve our timber heritage history.

I'd also like to thank Father Poole and the Catholic Church for letting us use their facility here and to Joe Brown  
and Walter Peckham, who are the sound wizards, who are making all this sound possible. And I'll remind you of  
the next two programs. February 19th, the History of Our Churches. Kim Briggeman, and Pastor Carl Rohr and  
Pastor Dan Taylor tell the creation stories of St. Ann Catholic Church, our Savior's Lutheran Church and Hope  
Baptist Church. And the Roundtable is followed by the pasty dinner, which we had previously said was gonna  
be the next time, but they moved it up to February. So make sure you remember that. We'll send out a little card.  
And then March 19th the Anaconda Company Logging camps. Dennis Sain will discuss the logging camp  
Headquarters Camp at Woodworth, Montana. So we'll look forward to that.

Anyway, today we have a special program, as you can see on the Early Homemakers of Bonner, by our very  
own Hooligan, otherwise known as Glenn Max Smith. And he's gonna give us an, I'm sure, an entertaining  
program on the early homemakers. And we've brought in some objects from the History Center and Shirley  
(Olson) has also brought.

**Glenn Max Smith:** (Inaudible)

**Minie Smith:** So, which I'm sure you'll explain.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay.

**Minie Smith:** Yeah. I'll turn it over to, to you.

[00:04:25] **Glenn Max Smith:** I used to have one of these when I was in the service, but I lost it, so I made  
another one just for now. So if any of you folks out here remember back in the day when I was a trained fire  
instructor and I instructed United States rifle caliber .30 M1 gas-operated clip-fed semi-automatic shoulder  
weapons, and I pointed to the various stuff with this pointer. Anyway, that's way back when. That was about  
into the sixties.

[00:05:00] First thing I want to do for today's session is introduce some of the homemakers. Not so much as I'm  
going to pick any one of you out and make you stand up and talk. I'm going to kind of generalize it. They were a  
bunch of amazing ladies, I thought. They were devoted to their families, and what they did was create the best  
home life possible using what was available to them at the time. Now, if you look over here, (indicates display)  
you can see those ladies were challenged. You know, a canning jar with a glass lid of all things. I love to can. I  
love to help my wife, but that glass lid kind of threw me for a loop.

Donna Betts helped me with this. Shirley helped me. We went up to dinner one time at a unique little restaurant  
up there at Gold Creek. Kenny [Peers], you were there. And she briefed me a little bit. In fact, Ed even told me  
how to take the seals off one of them when it's time to empty the contents. So the ladies, like I say, they really  
worked. In fact, Shirley back here, I asked her for help, but she told me, she says, "Well, gosh, I don't know. All  
these things was just something we did." So I thought, "Oh boy, I got a whole bunch of subject here and I don't  
know how to talk about it." But when I started doing research, oh my God, these ladies done one hell of a lot out  
here.

Whoops. Where's Willis? He's supposed to keep me from swearing. (laughter)

**Jimmie Willis:** Yeah.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay. When I first came to Bonner, I'm gonna move over here for a minute. When I first  
came to Bonner, can you still hear me? (Discussion about the microphone)

When I first came to Bonner, I lived in a railroad house right here, y'all see that? Right up here on the east end. My parents, stepdad, can't say a whole lot about that fellow that I really like. But anyway, he lived there and he worked up here. That was the Milwaukee maintenance facility. That's just, just east of the crossing between the crossing and the bridge. This green area here. (indicates on map) That was the community gardens. And I would like to think that the ladies had a lot of input, the homemakers, on what was raised here because they canned it, they preserved this to take their families through the winter. And there's some of the equipment over here, they used. The old pressure cooker and the glass top jars. Eventually we went to the regular jar lid, you know, that when you screwed it down, it pinged when it was all sealed up. So with this here, when it was time to plant this garden, if you look from the gardens, which is up here in the north part of the mill site, if you look across this parking lot over here to Crystal Peak, you see a little white patch of snow up there, and that was the go button.

When the snow melt went out of that little peak, that was time to, "Okay, let's get these gardens plowed up. Let's get 'em planted. Let's get the produce going in there." Ed, Bill and I, we flew a lot of kites out there before they started plowing that garden up. Ed could send a kite up. By golly, he could send that up over the old smokestack. It's the only one of us, I think that could do that.

But anyway, that's how the gardens were situated. They were part of a horse exercise yard. And of course, with those draft animals, they deposited a lot of good fertilizer. Then they stomped it in the ground. So when it come time to make a garden, you had a good garden.

Okay. Now that I've landed in Bonner and everybody's kind of saying, "Oh shit, that guy," whoops, "that guy is on the wrong side of the tracks. We don't know whether we're gonna like him or not. We're gonna call him the Hooligan anyway, because we're just not sure about him." So the first thing I wanted to do was take a trip down through Bonner. (indicates places on a map of Bonner)

[00:10:05] I want to go up here into what they call the "chicken coops" and check this out, and then I wanted to walk down the street and take the whole town in. At that time, there was over 60 houses out here. So starting up here, the "chicken coops," such as right along here. They were awful, shabby. I've heard horror stories about folks that lived in those things. It would scare ya to death, especially on a winter's day like we're having. So eventually they were torn down. Thank goodness for that.

But you got down in here, this fella, if I remember right, could drink a lot of Highlander Beer. Cully Johnson. Next to him I think was Ed Boyington, Is that his name? And then, of course, Shirley's down here, Shirley and Ed and Stan, they're all down here.

But when I'm walking down this street, the thoughts going through my mind at the time - you ever get a tune stuck in your head and you hum it over and over and you can't get rid of it? Well, at that time, the tune stuck in my head, believe it or not, was Davey Crockett. This guy with a coonskin cap that could do just about every kind of miracle you could imagine.

So I'm walking down the street humming Davey Crockett to myself, and I'm looking for a special car that the Ford Motor Company had made, called a Shoebox Ford. And it was a drastic change from the old cars. I like to refer to them older cars as a melted candy bar. You know, sat in the sun too long, kind of oozed out over itself.

But now we got this brand new Shoebox Ford, and that is cool. And I am proud to say today, good friend of mine, two of 'em back here, have one that they have restored and boy, talk about the memories, which is their personal plate they have on the back of that car. So there are some great memories to be had on that old Shoebox Ford.

As you go down, of course, I made mention to Donna Betts, real good friend of mine. I can't say enough nice about her, uh, but we lost her last summer. She had a knack for making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches like you couldn't believe, and they were, her sandwiches were gauged by the thickness of the slice of bread was, how thick the jelly went on it, and the peanut butter went on it. And her family loved them, and I got to thinking of what kind of jelly would she use? Chances are they would've been chokecherry. Boy, these two guys right here, [Oleans] their dad could make the best daggone chokecherry wine you'd ever want to sip! And between Ed and Stan, I don't know which was the better of the two. We'd once in a while borrow a jug of that. And boy, the times we had with that stuff. I'll tell you what!

So, when I'm walking down the street here, I notice that the mill is separate. What goes on over here? It's pretty well labor intensive. I mean, this is where the men worked. At least that's what I was told. If you're a sissy or a wienie don't even bother showing up over here, or we ain't got a place for you.

On this side of the tracks was where the ladies lived, the homemakers. And there was some, I would like to say, some real interesting ladies. This lady here in the third house, Emma Magnuson...

**unidentified speaker:** Excuse me. About what year were you talking about?

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay. I'm going back to the year when *'I Like Ike'* was the 34th president and that new Shoebox Ford, that was in 1950. The first one come out in 1949. Okay. That kind of helped bring us, bring us up to the time period. Yeah.

**unidentified speaker:** You were about five years old then? (laughter)

**Sharon Smith:** He wishes!

**Glenn Max Smith:** Just slightly more, slightly more. Just enough to really enjoy getting into mischief. Okay, the next lady here, Emma Magnuson, like I said, could make lefse. I didn't have any idea what lefse was, but I do now, and I'm thinking I've got this really cool thing I can talk about. Everybody makes lefse and it's good. Well, I sure like it anyway. You can tell! (pats belly)

[00:15:06] The next lady down the line here in the... kind of made us toe the mark. This lady was a great homemaker, kind of meticulous. Her name was Helen Otterson. Helen was kind of the, like the self-appointed town marshal. What would you say? A matriarch. By golly, she kept an eye on things. She was related to about every other person in Bonner. And you better toe the mark because like I said, she got her eye on you here. So once in a while she'd get a little bit obnoxious and for some reason, I don't know why, her garbage can would wind up sitting on top of her wood shed. Don't know how that ever happened, but after it did though, she would kind of tune down a little bit.

Okay, let me get some more notes here. I gotta talk about.

Bonner was a messy place. Not so much messy because the folks here didn't keep their yards up. It's like I mentioned earlier, this place is of the primary power source of steam. And you could see it's a good-sized mill. It took a lot of burning material, which was wood byproduct to generate the steam needed to run this place. So all that smoke and ash going up in the air, eventually it had to come back down.

Now, imagine a homemaker that's gotta do her laundry and that soot and them cinders is raining back down. I recently found out that Shirley's [Shirley Olean Olsen] mom would wait and do her laundry on a Monday, right? But she would check that smokestack, you know, and if that was blowing down and getting over Bonner, I imagine the laundry was kind of put off till the smoke drifted the other way.

Some of the ladies waited till the weekend and would do their laundry on the weekend. So it was a mess to do that laundry and then, to add insult to injury, when those ladies got up in the morning, one of the first things they did was they made a fire in the wood stove. So we don't have enough smoke, soot, and ash from the mill, we're gonna make some in our own stove. We're gonna send that back up. Bring it down.

You had to have it because for the coffee, the breakfast, and hot water was generated in these old stoves. So you wanted to wash your hands or dishes, you had to have that hot water, and that's where these ladies really stood up. They had to get up early in the morning, start this process going, and then continue their chores throughout the day. Okay, time for another note here.

One thing I noticed around the houses was, a lot of the houses, were smaller gardens. There was usually berries, fruit trees, condiments for the salads that they had, herbs, that sort of thing. So a lot of the houses, especially Helen's, I think Helen had a garden out there that was just meticulous. No weeds, just perfect. So she had she had quite a garden there that was separate of this big community garden.

Another one of my favorite days, this is why I am today like I am today, was baking day and these ladies could fire up one of them damned old wood stoves and make breads and pastries to die for. On a, on a nice day, you could walk down one of these back alleys and boy, your mouth would just be waterin', you know, from their homemade bread.

[00:19:35] **unidentified speaker:** Glenn, excuse me. What was the population of this area back then?

**Glenn Max Smith:** Yeah. Well, I couldn't tell you the exact population. It varied. One thing I can relate to was the fact we did have over 60 houses. A lot of 'em were torn down, but when you lived in Bonner, you didn't own the house. It belonged to the company. So when you retired, after 20 years, 40 years, 50 years, you moved on. So the population was constantly fluxing. So I would say, what, husband, wife, maybe three kids on the average, and there's over 60 houses.

Plus there was a gigantic old hotel, sat right there. Made some of the best cookies in town till Jim Willis come along. He kind of picked up on every Tuesday. So, you guys want some good cookies? Come on out to the History Center on Tuesday, we got the best in town. [refers to the Tuesday morning coffee meetings]

Okay, I want to talk a little bit now about these ladies had a busy day, especially laundry. One delightful story I remember hearing about was a lady who had a young boy kind of mischievous, about Stan's age. One of Stan's buddies, if I recall. When she would be out hanging her clothes on a clothesline, this little guy liked to take off.

So she says, "Fix him." She tied a rope around the suspenders of his pants, tied the other end of the rope to the clothes line. Now she had him on a leash. Busy hanging out clothes one day. Looked around for the, the mischievous little boy and all was left was a pair of pants with a rope tied to it. (laughter)

But at the end of those laundry days like that, when it came time to, the day is over. You know, we had at Bonner, we had this huge whistle, and when that whistle went off, you know, us guys, we went to work about eight in the morning. We worked till noon. Take an hour lunch, blow the whistle. Time to time to have your lunch.

Blow it again. Come back. Let's go to work again. At five o'clock, blow it. That's time to quit. Okay. That didn't happen for the ladies. They still had supper that they had to put on, to cook, to clean up after. And you think, okay, now maybe some of the kids will have to do the dishes, but for the most part, these ladies are responsible.

So what do we do after we do the dishes? Is it time to sit down and take a break? No. You sit down now and take a break with a mending basket 'cuz you've done the laundry up. Somebody has ripped hole in their pants, button fell off the shirt. So they darned the socks, patched the clothes. And I have tried this. I figured there's no sense of me standing up here shooting my mouth off if I don't at least see where these ladies went to, how they walked to where they got, see if I could do it, which I did. About three different items and I quit. But it was a lot of fun while I was doing it. Anyway, let me get another card here so I got some more yet to talk about.

Okay. There is some things I will never be able to do and that is needle work. Some of these ladies, especially for us kids and our sleigh ridin' hill that we had could knit mittens and warm socks that would allow us to hit that hill on a day like we got today and just have a great time. They also crocheted, embroidered. There was a lot of things that these ladies could do that I can't even begin to try. I'd love to, but, well, what a mess I would make.

So this might be a topic that we might want to get together sometime and talk about is how did you make that quilt? To me, these old houses out here were not insulated. They were heated with wood. And on weather like we're having, they were doggone cold. But with the quilts that these ladies could make, they not only warmed your toes, but your hearts as well, at least mine, because going to bed when you first went into that bedroom, you opened the door because you conserved the heat for the main part of the house.

[00:25:16] Bedtime. You went into that bedroom, it was cold. You dive under them blankets, it's cold. Pull up the quilt, and slowly starts warming up. So those quilts to me, very important, and I can't thank these ladies enough. They took the time to make them.

Okay. Any input from you folks on a favorite memory you might have? Kenny?

[00:25:55] **Ken Peers:** My mother and Maureen and quite a few women were in the home demonstration club here in Milltown and Bonner.

**Maureen Peers:** Ideal Homes.

**Ken Peers:** I Ideal Homes, it was called.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Cool.

**Ken Peers:** And Maureen has a list of the ladies that were involved in that. I think she's the only survivor, maybe Virginia Thibodeau if she was here, but (overtalking) are the names of those ladies that were involved in that and maybe she'd agree to.

**Maureen Peers:** And I'm sure that, you know, I, Kenny and, I got married in 1959, and so right away I was inducted into Helen's Ideal Homes Club. But I'm sure there were some before that period of time and, and maybe some that I've missed, but we sat down the other day and Monida Disbrow from the store, Ellen Doucette, Blanche Geary, Marguerite Gonsier, Nettie Hill and her daughter, Catherine Hayes, Hazel Karkanen, Mike Kolpa, Lydia Lerch and this is me now... it's finally came to me. I think I'm right that her name was Elizabeth, but she had seniority and Kenny, when his mother would talk about her, it was Mrs. Meads. So that's what it says to you. And Helen Pierce, myself, Elma Stiff, Emily Thibodeau, Virginia Thibodeau and Catherine Towsley, and like I say, that there may have been more before I became active, but that was Ideal Homes '59 to '63. Then I went to work like the rest of world. And then had to quit afternoons.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Oh boy. Okay. I promised Shirley I wouldn't put her on the spot, so I'll look away. There was a Birthday Club out here. Do you remember some of the ladies that was in that?

[00:26:51] **Shirley Olson:** I do remember some of them. Maybe Stan and Ed can remember some too. There was my mother and there was Mrs. **Libel (?)**, Mrs. Labbe, Mrs. Camel. Of course we'd call them Mrs. in those days. I can't even remember their first names. Mrs. LaForge. And then there were two or three that would come from Milltown and whenever one would have a birthday they'd all have dress up with their nice dresses and have a birthday party at that house.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Cool. That is so neat. Which takes me back to a memory.

**unidentified speaker:** Mrs. Winters.

**Shirley Olson:** Yeah. Mrs. Winters. She lived in Bonner.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay. Well, the birthday club, I imagine they had cake.

**Shirley Olson:** Oh, yes.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay, now I've made some diagrams of a wood stove. Now there's an art. Fire up that wood stove. Get an even heat. Make sure that there's no soot on that oven that's cleaned out.

[00:29:46] Make that cake from scratch. You don't take... I can do a Duncan Hines. Throw that rascal in the bowl there and put a mixer on it. Man, I can just go with the best of them. But to make a cake like what Shirley was talking about in a stove like that, I mean, you ain't finding that at Fred's Appliance. You know it's Duncan Hines and turnd a button and punched the timer and go do something else.

So I've tried this with my own stove. I don't have a wood baked stone, but I have made me a cake at, I don't know, you could use it for stepping stone out on the patio or something. You know, I did give it a shot, so I have to bring up that memory of how these ladies could fire one of them cook stoves like that.

I do remember getting in trouble and I think Shirley explained this to me one day. When you're a of bunch of kids and you're having fun, and you decide, "Let's go over to Ed's house and do something," and you come stomping in the back door and there's a cake in the oven and that cake falls in. I don't know what made the cake fall in, but I do know we got thrown out. (laughter)

So, these were things that the homemakers in Bonner... You know, I don't know how to say thank you enough to these ladies for creating the type of memory that I have.

**Judy Matson:** I've got a question. Something you told us at the History Center about the kind of wood that the ladies had to choose to make their stoves burn evenly and how I think you had a part in delivering some of that wood.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Yeah, I had an enterprise. I did haul some firewood. What the ladies liked, and this falls more into the men's category, but we would have wood delivered from the mill and it was stacked up to be seasoned outside. So you had various cords. I don't know how many cords. An average house would take a bunch.

**unidentified speaker:** Seven cords. Seven cords every year.

**Glenn Max Smith:** So you had to have this on reserve, starting to cure. What you had cured went into a woodshed to keep the snow and the inclement weather off it. Now, what the ladies liked for burning that oven... because the fire box, and I have the diagrams over here, the fire box is bordered by a water jacket to the left and the oven on the right. So it's kind of a long oven. There's a little door on the front of that stove. You'd need to open that and insert a piece of wood in there that didn't have too many knots because a knot could burn really a little bit too hot. So you might have hot and cold spots in this oven.

It's not like Fred's Appliance where you know you have this super-duper razoo push-button thing. It took a lot of good thinking from these ladies on how to fire that stove, and I would imagine they would ask the husbands to set aside some better chunks for baking purposes. I'm going to guess because, like I say, I'm a Hooligan and I came from a railroad house and a fringe benefit for a railroader was coal. So we burned a lot of coal, nasty stinking smelling stuff. Mix that in with the smoke off old 1246. You know, the last locomotive in Bonner. Whoa. It could get interesting. Okay, go ahead.

**Jim Habeck:** There's one thing one thing missing on your display table, and that is the workman's lunch bucket with the thermos jug in it. You haven't even mentioned it and why would you? It's not even on display. What I remember from the Midwest in Northern Wisconsin, that the wives of miners sent their husbands off with what? Pasties! (Glenn--Pasties, can't beat them!) So, what would the mill worker's wife prepare also in the morning to send her husband off with both... You talked about that one hour lunch break. I'm not quite sure what they were doing except...

**Glenn Max Smith:** A lot of gambling! Shirley explained to me one time how her mom made a lunch for her dad. And by the way, her dad run the old Corliss steam engine. That was a magnificent old piece of machinery that was kept in a condition, you could take that damn machine and put it in an emergency room in a hospital. It was that meticulously maintained. But anyway, Shirley told me about the lunches that her mom packed, and I believe a chocolate pudding was important. Was it?

[00:35:22] **Shirley Olson:** Rice. Rice pudding for him.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Rice pudding. Okay. And any particular sandwich that he preferred?

**Shirley Olson:** Fried egg and (unclear – off microphone)

**Glenn Max Smith:** Homemade bread definitely. Look at me.

**Shirley Olson:** (unclear – off microphone)

**Glenn Max Smith:** Cookies? OK. Stan what did you pack in your lunches when we worked together?

**Stan Olean:** (unclear) Shirley packed a lot of my lunches ‘cuz I was livin’ with her and Ike [Olson] and it was usually a sandwich and some cookies or...you know, they hadn’t made Twinkies and stuff in those days

**Glenn Max Smith:** You know, it’s sad and it’s part of my fault. I went down to the History Center. I believe we have a lunch bucket down there. And I believe it might be your dad’s, if I remember right.

**Shirley Olson:** My dad’s is sitting on the shelf in my kitchen and I should have brought it. It has the thermos in it and the jar – he always took his rice pudding in it (unclear)

**Glenn Max Smith:** Oh, man, the memories. Great ones. Love it. Okay, anything more? Because I’ve got – whoops. Here we go.

**Ken Peers:** In our house breakfast was pretty important and my mother had a sourdough starter for her pancakes that she got from my dad’s mom. It probably dated back to the turn of the century, And I just loved ‘em and we had them every morning, never failed. I went in the service in 1955 and I came home in ‘58 and I was droolin’ for some pancakes and I said, “Where’s the pancakes, Mom?”

And she said, “I don’t know, your Dad got tired of ‘em the other day and we haven’t made ‘em since.” After 60 years of eating them.

**Glenn Max Smith:** (laughs) How great is that? Okay, go ahead.

**Jim Habeck:** The wives in Missoula when their husbands went off to the lumber mills in town there often had church social groups that they met and they weren’t all stay at home moms in the literal sense. Once the children went off to school, the women did form social groups. Often the churches were the organizer of such groups, but I have to believe that were other kinds of...I’m not sure if they had bowling leagues in Bonner or whatever. The women must have socialized and gossiped with one another. (overtalking)

**Glenn Max Smith:** Yeah. I believe that that exists even today. I thought that I was just gonna really amaze you folks with makin’ lefse. Come to find out, this is still alive and well. These ladies are still making that. So what other socializing they did, I’m not sure. Some were involved with Girl Scouts.

**Unknown speaker:** Quilting and book reviews.

**Glenn Max Smith:** That still goes on over here at the Lutheran Church. And the quilts, like I mentioned earlier, they were a life saver out here in Bonner when I was growin’ up.

**Unknown speaker:** Pinochle parties

**Glenn Max Smith:** Okay, pinochle parties. For the summer months, now this was more of a husband-wife thing. Baseball was a big pastime out here and the ball diamond here, we had the Bonner Highlanders; we had the Bonner Lumberjacks; and then all of us kids would get out there. The favorite player that I had was Odegaard. When he come up to bat, he hammered that ball out there and break that bat every damned time. Well us kids, we never had the power to hit a ball like Odegaard, but if we would shag foul balls for him, we got the cracked bat. Then we could go down to the mill-site here to the electrician’s shop and we could snivel our way into getting’ a good roll of tape, tape that handle up, man, and we had us a Louisville Slugger you know that Odegaard broke in for us. We have his uniform down at the History Center on display down there.

[00:40:39] **Dennis Sain:** Your tape wasn’t electrician’s tape, it was...

**Glenn Max Smith:** Some kind of fiber

**Dennis Sain:** Well we used it a lot – friction tape

**Glenn Max Smith:** Friction tape. There you go. Now. If we have no more, I have got a little video that I made and I told some of you folks before we ever got started on this that I went back to Minnesota to find an old washing machine that the ladies would have used during this time period. I brought it home, overhauled it. But when I took that machine apart, I could not believe what I saw. That lady must have washed clothes every day of the week for her entire life. The wear on that was incredible, but I did manage to get it rebuilt right down to the motor. I have my granddaughter...once we got it runnin', with the help of my wife Sharon, we fired that old machine up, put some water [and] some laundry detergent in it and we had this gal of today, my granddaughter, wash clothes in an old machine that was (unclear) around here durin' the 50s.

I also have her...we fired up this old pressure cooker (gestures to cooker) and there's a treat, I mean it worked. But you had to be careful of them old things. I've heard some stories about a...if you got somethin' wrong, you could send that lid up through the damn roof and redecorate your ceiling. So Helen Otterson, when I think of her, she liked to can outside because the heat that was generated in these kitchens in August when the gardens come in was tremendous. So Helen was able to take this outside and that scene that I'll have is my granddaughter doing this outside.

So, talk about the smoke, the soot, hard-workin' ladies, laundry, all of that. So I've got some of that on the video here. It's a homemade video so don't get after me. My old machinery is just wore out. I did the best I could. So here it is.

[00:40:39] Video "Early Home Makers of Bonner" Scenes of his granddaughter doing laundry in the wringer washer, hanging clothes on the line, mending clothes, and baking bread in a wood kitchen stove. The next section shows the method for making Emma Magnussen's lefse. Following that is a section on canning.

(narration from video)

*The challenges was, I started by asking several ladies about their contributions to home making in Bonner. Most simply stated, "It was just something we did." Eventually, some of my closest neighbors came to my rescue, and this is what I came up with.*

*When you think of Bonner, you think of the huge Anaconda Company sawmill where steam was the primary power source. Huge amounts of wood products were burned to convert water into steam. This process also produced massive amounts of soot, cinder, and smoke, which eventually settled over the entire townsite. Now let's add to this mess a little bit.*

*We're going to add some ingredients from coal burning, bunker crude oil burning. This took place in the steam locomotives that operated on the railroad. Old number 7 here burned coal, so it dumped most of its cinders out in the woods. But this old locomotive here, 1246, burned bunker crude, and it was owned by the Milwaukee Railroad. And the last locomotive to run in Bonner.*

*Fred's Appliance didn't have the washer I needed, so with the help of my son and some close friends, I discovered this old ringer-type washer out in (unclear) Minnesota. A few weeks of restoration and some TLC brought this well-worn machine back to life. A real kick in the pants for our homemakers, and requiring them to heat their hot water in a wood-fired stove. It adds some more smoke, soot, and cinders to the atmosphere. The (unclear) clothes had to be air-dried and once again Fred's Appliance did not have the type of dryer I needed.*

*Our homemakers relied on clotheslines, which had to be wiped down with a damp cloth before the clothes could be hung on them. Wooden clothespins secured the laundry to the clotheslines, and once again, Fred's Appliance didn't have the clothespins as they sell appliances, only appliances.*

*Okay, we see Shelby here, she's my granddaughter, she's going to add the laundry detergent is to the washer. When that's in, she'll add the clothes. We're going to do some white linens here, just to illustrate the fact, (unclear) that soot, smoke and cinders was not going to go well with this process.*

*So Shelby puts this in there. She's used to the water type washer so this is quite a treat for her. There's the old machine. Remarkably, it's still hanging together. It was worn like nothing I had ever seen. The lady that previously owned it worked the heck out of it, but with a lot of sweat, tears and a few choice words, I got her back up online.*

*Now this is the scary part. That ringer, I disabled that ringer just enough so that should my granddaughter get caught at it, she wouldn't get hurt really bad. So what we're doing here is we're having her run the soapy laundry through the ringer into the rinse water.*

*It's interesting to note that that stick she's holding was my grandmother's favorite stick for smoking my britches whenever I messed up. Seems to me she smoked my britches quite a few times with a stick just like that.*

*Let's get some rinse water in here now and rinse these clothes again. Make sure we get every trace of that soap out of there. We get a good thorough rinse then we'll drain this all out and we'll wring them and get 'em ready to hang on the clothes line. Okay, take that (unclear) on that ringer. It gauges so that it rings the water out, pulls the clothes out of the machine into the basket.*

*Takes lots of lots of prep. The main thing is to watch your fingers. There's many a lady that can testify to the fact that they didn't. And the pain was tremendous.*

*It's a treat to watch my granddaughter step back into time like this. Just a good way to explain to them in a way that they'll never forget just how much work their grandmothers and great grandmothers did.*

*Now let's take 'em out and hang them on the dryer or for Fred's Appliance. Let's just call 'em old fashioned clothes lines.*

*Hang them up over the lines and then you secure 'em with the wooden clothes pins, and I don't know where you could find wooden clothes pins today. I'm sure they make 'em and somebody must sell 'em. But anyway, we have a nice sunny day, minimal wind, so there's not much debris blowing around, and the sawmill at Bonner is now shut down so my granddaughter doesn't have to deal with any soot that might blow in off a rooftop or mess her clean white linens up in some nasty way.*

*Usually when that happened, those white linens look like zebra skins.*

*Imagine a small child out there while this lady's hanging her clothes. Let's say he's a boy and he is mischievous as hell. One way of dealing with that mischievous little boy was to tie a rope around the suspenders in his pants and then tie the other end of the rope on to the clothes line. Sometimes the lady just found a pair of pants. No kid.*

*Okay. After the clothes are all washed, dried, and hung up, it's time to fold them and check for any defects that might be in such items you look for would be missing buttons or something that needs a patch. And a lot of times these ladies didn't have much time during the day, so they had to do this task usually after their husbands come home from work.*

*So they would need a sewing machine. Oh, button box full of buttons. And in this case here, a special little device called a darning egg. That's for holes in socks. You fit that into the sock. Line that hole up on it, and when you get everything just right, you start a weaving process to close that hole back up. You don't want to pull it up tight or you're gonna wear a blister on somebody's heel. So you weave that to about to the same contour or what the sock already is.*

*Shelby's right at home with this daring egg. Brand new experience for her.*

*Okay, now the wood-fired cook stoves and these are a real challenge. In so much as you needed to know exactly how they worked. Once you mastered that, you could cook some of the finest cuisines, meals on these stoves that you'd ever want to sit down to. But first you need to know how to run 'em.*

*Shelby is uncovering the fire box. Inside that firebox is a water jacket. That water jacket was used to heat hot water, which was stored in the tank, usually located right behind the stove.*

*Okay. Now the serious part. You're baking bread or something like that. You put a long, even burning stick of wood in there, and you need to slide that into the fire. Move below that, you'll have the drafts, which you control the amount of burn to that fire, and then when it's all burnt, the ashes will drop into this ash pan that's located on the bottom.*

*Also you'll find a little door just under the oven, and that's where you rake the soot down from around the oven. You want that oven to heat evenly. By having soot built up in certain areas would cause cool spots and uneven baking for bread, cakes, pies, and whatever else you want to put in there.*

*Definitely wanted to use that lid lifter. Those lids are hot. Okay, let's check out some bread. The stove was donated by Guy Trenary. It is a family heirloom and I think today will be the first time that stove has baked some bread for a long, long time. So let's see how Shelby does here with her fresh bread.*

*Well, there's one pan. Let's put this on top of the stove, but not in an area where it's gonna be too hot, 'cuz we might have had to cool this baking process down.*



*Okay, return the grate to the oven, close the oven door. Then put the hot pads up at such a spot that you'll be able to find 'em if you need them again.*

*Okay. There is some fine looking bread. Shelby done a great job.*

*Another thing that was baked on top of these stoves, well it wasn't really baked, it was kind of cooked and baked together. And that's Norwegian lefse and Emma Magnusen showed me how to make the thinnest lefse in Bonner. Emma's long gone, but we did manage to find this clip of lefse making that came out of Bergen, Norway, little farm outside of Bergen, Norway, and here's how you do lefse.*

*The community gardens, you notice there's a patch of snow up on that mountain and that's Crystal Peak. Look over the top of the Lutheran Church parking lot, you'll see that. That was the start button to get those gardens ready to plant. Usually the ladies of the town, the homemakers, decided what kind of plants that they would need to plant in there and how they could use that to support their family through the up and coming seasons.*

*The gardens actually were an exercise yard used by the draft animals. Now here, once we get the gardens and the produce raised here is an early day pressure cooker. You have to be careful with these guys. You want to make sure the gaskets are right, the seals are right, the clamps are right. Same with the pop off valves and the steam regulators. If you messed up, you could wind up setting the lid off that thing right up through the ceiling in your kitchen.*

*Shelby's got this thing just about ready to go. A few more adjustments, recheck what she's done. And I think she's about ready to set this up with the stove. Now a stove like this, I've seen Helen Otterson use some type of stove. It took them out of the heat of the kitchen, into the back porch, where it was much cooler to go through this process.*

*Okay, we've got the pressure cooker on. Let's start building some steam pressure. We're going to need about 10 pounds on these tomatoes. As soon as that pressure's up to 10 pounds, we're going to set the pressure regulator to maintain that all during the cooking cycle. You'll want to follow your recipe close when you, for the length of cooking that you get.*

*Once you're done, you've got a whole bunch of real fine produce to last through the winter.*

*I'd like to make a tribute now to a special friend of mine. While creating this story, I was deeply affected by the loss of this childhood neighbor. She provided me a myriad of great memories that she shared with her grandma Clara and her grandpa Albert who lived in the last house on the east side of Highway 20. as you head up the Blackfoot Valley.*

*Well, that sturdy old pine tree with the plants growing underneath it, that would remind me a lot of the Barta family. And the fruits that you saw there were Oregon grape. They make some of the finest jelly you'll ever want to taste.*

*And the beauty of the outdoors in the mountains like that is just something you need to experience. And here's some wild Oregon grapes growing.*

*It'll be picked. And my wife and oldest daughter like to use a steamer in order to get the juice off these berries, but she had to keep the pulp of the seeds and all that out of the jelly. So they'll use a steamer to process these berries. They're kind of tart, take a lot of sugar, now here's the steamer.*

*You can see them berries are cooking down real nice. And for Donna, she had a special knack of makin' a peanut butter and jelly sandwich that I would call super PB and J. That sandwich's thickness was determined by the thickness of the slice of bread she had. With that slice thickness in her mind, she spread peanut butter and jelly to match that thickness.*

[00:59:42] **Glenn Max Smith:** That's the end. My old camera died. (applause)

**Ken Peers:** Max, I'd like to (unclear) what one of those old wringers could do to you. I was a helper with my mother and I got my fingers caught in (shows scars on hand)

**Glenn Max Smith:** God! I don't know if I want to see that or not. It's terrible! OK. Like I was sayin' my old camera give up and died. I used that camera for, oh God, thirty years or better. I have gone fishin' with it. I have gone huntin' with it. And I tracked progress with the mill and the last time we rebuilt. And I thought, "I think I can get one more round out of this thing. I'm kind of an amateur but that's the best I can come up with. And I had a great time doin' it. It was a lot of fun.

Plus we've got this now. If I'm not here to make this presentation, there are school teachers, there's Girl Scout leaders, you know, there are members in our community that might want to expose their students or whatever to

what used to happen out here. And I hope that our effort through our little historical [museum] will contribute to that. That's all I have, but I'm sure out here in this audience there is some more great stories that I would sure like to hear or any of us. Dennis, or ... Go ahead.

**Robert Dunlop:** Thanks to the granddaughter that was demonstrating.

**Glenn Max Smith:** All right! I'll pass that on. She'll appreciate hearin' that.

**Frank Betts:** When you were referrin' to the quilts that they made back then. They were a lot heavier quilts than they make today too. They were a lot different and they were a lot heavier. I mean you had to have that heavier quilt to stay warm. Once in a while when you'd get up in the mornin', they were froze to the wall. You were still nice and warm. You had to have that extra heavy quilt.

**Glenn Max Smith:** Like up there in the chicken coops. Lu Waddington told me some stories about the windows freezin' shut so she'd wipe it to see who was outside and before she'd get her eye down there it was froze again. Another thing I liked about watchin' the ladies from way back then – nothing went to waste. If that shirt couldn't be patched, no more buttons sewed on it, they had little patterns that they could make quilting blocks and they sewed a myriad of these blocks together till they got a square. It would be about a 12-inch square. And those were in turn all sewed together. Then the batting went inside. I don't know what they called the layer underneath. It was put on a stretching frame, stretched out and then they would pass a needle through everything usually in the corners of the squares. In my family they do this quite regular, they'd have a kid underneath. Soon as that needle stops movin' the kid grabs the needle and shoves it back up, and they make a tie.

So, I believe the most intricate quilt I ever saw for utilizing garments that were, ... you just couldn't use any more. There was a shirt pocket, complete with a button and everything, that was sewed into this quilting block. And then just recently I believe I saw a TV program, a series there about a homestead family up in Alaska that made some seat covers out of a pair of pants and shirt for their son who was goin' off to college. But the talent that these ladies had, not only for quilts, but for a myriad of other things, it's just unbelievable and I'd love to be able to capture more of it. So if anybody wants to buy me a brand new video camera (laughter) I'd be willin' to make some more. Go ahead.

[01:04:41 **Jim Habeck:** I, through my own reading, have learned that many girls dropped out the Missoula County High School at 15 or 16 to get married. I'm trying to figure out when a girl of 15 or 16 would have acquired the skills that you've been talking about for the last hour from their mothers which would have been taking away from their academic preparation in other ways. I have to believe that a girl when she was 10 or 12 had in mind that she was going to be a mom, stay at home wife and so on and as soon as .... And the mother of that daughter would be teaching that 12 or 15 year old these skills that you were talking about...cooking and canning and knitting and quilting and everything else and by the time they were 16 they were able, I'm not sure what the records would show for marriage, but I know they were dropping out and getting married way before they do today, obviously. But they were entering that marriage with the skills. One more thing, if these women were to teach their daughters these skills, passing it on from generation to generation.

**Glenn Max Smith:** That's true and I can say from personal experience. Sharon and I were married, she was 16 and I can honestly say, "What an incredible adventure this has been." And she's passing this stuff on to our daughters and granddaughters. How she could do all that and put up with me. (laughter)

I was, I was telling, you know, we have dishwashers today thanks to Fred's Appliance. I'll tell you a story about the first dishwasher I ever invented and we were on strike here at the mill and it was a great time for me to load the pickup and the camper up and I'm going to Rainbow Lake. There's some pike up there to die for.

So I go to Rainbow Lake and I am enjoying it. Boy, I'm catching pike like you wouldn't believe. My wife came to visit a day early and she was, you know, a typical wife who's working. "Oh, I had a heck of a day. You know what I could use is a good cup of coffee." And I thought, oh hell, the coffee pot's in the boat.

"What's it doin' in the boat?" she says. Well, I'm not a very good housewife. So what I did is I had this bag, it looks like fish net. So when I was done with my breakfast, I put everything in the bag and tied it on the back of the boat, and then I go fishing. Now here's my wife wanting a cup of coffee. Where's that coffee pot?

Man, am I in for it now! So I explained to her and the lecture I took, my goodness. You know, so she not only put up with, with me and some of my shenanigans, but we had, we started an adventure that most people says it'll never last. And I don't know how it did, but I am damn lucky. Okay. Anybody else have some good fish stories? Okay, that's all of mine. Thank you. (Applause)

(Outro music and credits)



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