

BONNER MILLTOWN HISTORY CENTER

BONNER POST OFFICE BUILDING - PO BOX 726, BONNER MT 59823

HRS: TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY 2 - 4:30 P.M.



Photo donated by Rick and Pat Swanson.

This Milltown home dates back to the early 1900's. The Western Lumber Company is in the background on the left.

An Historic Milltown House

By Minnie Smith

If you have not had a chance to stop by the History Center, we encourage you to do so! A growing number of artifacts from Anaconda to Champion to Stimson now line our walls as well as photographs and articles that we have scanned and can reprint. We are extremely grateful to the folks who have been willing to share their history with the Center.

Here's a recent example: **Rick Swanson** brought in a picture of the Margaret Hotel and a picture of a house in Milltown that he had gotten from a relative in Seattle. The house was distinctive but where was it?

First we checked the Demmons Collection, that wonderful photo collection put together by Jack Demmons as part of the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations in Bonner. We found the matching picture and it was labeled the Sylten House.

But who were the Syltens? Turns out that the first service of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in 1908 was held in Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Sylten's house, a fact we learned from the book on Bonner History, *A Grass Roots Tribute*. The Polk City Directory confirmed that Andrew Sytlen worked at the Anaconda mill for several years as a laborer and planer, but must have left as his name no longer appears after 1915.

The house appears in the historic inventory of Milltown although over the intervening years has had considerable changes made to it.

The house is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Brown. 4

Bonner Milltown History Center Calendar

Celebrate Bike Walk Bus Week and healthy transportation April 30 - May 7

April 30: Milltown State Park Preview

1 - 3 p.m. Catch the ASUM Park-N-Ride bus at the Park-N-Ride lot, 1122 East Broadway (in the lot with the wind turbine) at 1 p.m. Or bike or walk to the Black Bridge in Milltown at 1:15. Join FWP Park Manager Mike Kustudia for a sneak preview tour of the Gateway and the Confluence areas of the new State Park, set to open in the summer of 2012. Bus returns to Park-N-Ride at 3 p.m. Sponsored by ASUM, FWP, Bonner Milltown History Center.

April 30: Forestry Day at Historical Museum at Fort Missoula

Forestry Day, 9:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit historic forestry and logging equipment, operating steam-powered sawmill, restored fire lookout tower, Bonner's Willamette engine. Demonstrations, competitions, food and fun.

May 1: The Old Timers Party Returns! Calling all Old Timers and Old Timer Wannabe's...

2 - 4 p.m. "Lion's Den," Hellgate Lion's Park, West Riverside. Stories, music, pie and coffee. Free.

Thanks to the Hellgate Lions for generously donating use of the barn.

May 2 - 5: Bonner Self Guided Walking

Tours Mon - Thurs, 2 - 4:30 p.m. Walk, bike or ride the Mountain Line to the Bonner Milltown History Center (Bonner Post Office bldg), enjoy local displays and refreshments at the History Center, pick up a brochure and stroll through historic Bonner before returning to Missoula on the bus.

*KEEPING OUR LOCAL AND TIMBER HERITAGE ALIVE FOR
THE EDUCATION & ENJOYMENT OF THE PUBLIC*

Roundtable Series Featured Topics Capturing Special Features of Bonner's History

By Minnie Smith & Judy Matson

"Remembering Local 3038," Jan. 16, featured panel members **Jim Hill**, **Charlie Long**, and **Dennis Sain** who gave a look into the challenging demands, frustrations and rewards inherent in union work. Jim served as Business Agent; Charlie kept records and personally collected dues from all mill employees before the days of computers; Dennis served as shop steward and plant committeeman balancing concerns of labor and management.

The second Roundtable, Feb. 20, focused on fire at the mill and in the area. **Frank Betts** gave a great presentation on the fire prevention system at the mill, even passing around sprinkler heads going back as far as 1908! Frank was in charge of maintaining the system for many years. **Glenn Smith** reminded all of the first major fire at the mill when it was destroyed in January of 1919. Dennis Sain read a moving account

of **Fred Gunsler** and **Len Boe** who escaped the 1962 Gold Creek fire under a dozer completely surrounded by fire. Last but hardly least was fire Chief **Bill Colwell** who spoke of the history of the rural fire department in Piltzville established 40 years ago. Four members of the current rural fire department attended as did numerous early members of that department who were in the audience and added their stories to the event.

Completing the Roundtable season on Mar. 20 was "Scouting," a hike down memory lane led by **Robert "Dusty" Deschamps** and **Mike Nelson**. Photos shown by Tom Yule and a remembrance of early Scout leader and youth mentor Grant Higgins written by **Ilona Hangan** completed the program. Bonner's Troop 5 produced many Eagle Scouts and was a leading troupe since formed in the 1920's..

DVDs of programs are available at the History Center.

Bonner Milltown History Center welcomes your tax-deductible donations!

The all-volunteer center uses donations for postage, printing costs, and office and media supplies used in our oral history and photo scanning projects. A special Thank You to Scott Cooney, Blackfoot Land and Water, for donating space for the History Center.

Boots: Manly Footwear - Millworker's Choice - or Attitude Adjusters - Conclusion

By Glenn Max Smith

In the last issue Glenn introduced us to the Buffoon, the supervisor who made a special point of keeping an eye on the restroom, the only warm refuge in the Planer, and took great pride in charging inside to browbeat any potential loiterer, especially when the wind was howling down the Blackfoot with a wind chill factor that would easily rival Siberia. It was time to get even!

Setting Up the Buffoon

As the promise of spring and warmer weather was near, the planer crew decided to have a good laugh. After some careful planning, it was decided that an old pair of worn work boots would be used as an excellent prop for this simple but effective plot. When the Supervisor wasn't looking, the old pair of boots would be carried into the restroom and carefully placed in front of the commode. Next the door on the privacy stall around the commode would be closed. The third and final step in this plot would be for an excited employee to inform the supervisor that there was a Slacker in the restroom!!!

The Plot Thickens

An excitable employee was chosen to inform the Supervisor about the Slacker in the restroom, and it was hard for the crew to stifle their snickers as the Supervisor took the bait: Hook-Line-and Sinker. With a predictable response, the Supervisor almost ran into the office to pick up his pink slips in preparation for the anticipated termination. Next he crept into the restroom to wait in quiet seclusion while enough time expired to make his termination legal.

A loud voice could be heard in the restroom as the Supervisor announced his intentions and demanded that the Slacker come out of the commode and pick up his time card as he was now TERMINATED.

The lack of fearful response on the behalf of the Slacker seemed to further antagonize the Supervisor. Again he repeated his threats and this time he kicked the privacy door on the commode open! This was the cue for the elated crew to burst into laughter - especially since this elaborate plot worked so well.

Eating a Little Crow

Word of this humorous setup traveled throughout the entire mill and it was even discussed during staff meetings. It seemed to tickle the funny bones of upper management. With the start up of the new planer complex and the tune up process that followed, this story seemed to die out with the exception of a few "Old Timers."

Was the attitude adjustment effective? It lasted a little while but eventually many more diabolical and equally humorous plots played out before this supervisor went into retirement. Was he missed after retirement? NO!!