



BONNER MILLTOWN HISTORY CENTER AND MUSEUM

*"Keeping our local area and timber heritage alive for the enjoyment and education of the public."
December, 2015 Photo: Bosses Row in the winter of 1936-37. Demmons Collection*

Roundtables 2016

The Bonner Mill Site: Today and Tomorrow

By Andy Lukes

Here's your chance to hear first hand from the people and companies making current history at the Bonner Mill site. Mike Boehme and his partner Steve Nelson of Bonner Property Development, LLC will discuss their general development plan for developing the mill site property.

They will update the community on their progress to-date and general plans for the future. Mike will also moderate a panel of the owners or managers of the companies that have set up or are in the process of setting up business operations on the mill site.

They will individually answer the following three questions from the community:

1. Describe their current business in detail, its current size, product details, employees, and why they chose to relocate here?
2. What are their general plans to further develop their businesses over the next 5 to 10 years?
3. What can the Bonner/Milltown community do to help make their businesses succeed?

An open question and answer period will follow when all presentations are finished.

Mark your calendar for 2 p.m., Sunday, January 24 at St. Ann Catholic church in Bonner.

Future Roundtables:

February 21: Scott Kuehn, Society of American Foresters, and chair of Missoula Forestry Days at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula will present logging history in Montana

March 20: Smokejumpers will share their experiences. Pasty dinner to follow - Public welcome!

Tuesday Morning Coffee

Join your friends every Tuesday morning 9:30-11:30 a.m. for coffee, homemade cookies, and conversation hosted by Jim Willis. Has it been awhile since you've seen friends and co-workers from your department at the mill? Give them a call and renew acquaintance any Tuesday morning at the BMHC in the Bonner Post Office Building.

Hooligan Remembrances

Bonner's Community Gardens

By Glenn (Max) Smith

It was the spring of 1950 when I first climbed Bonner Mountain to the Hoover Trail and laid eye on Bonner's Community Gardens. S & H Green Stamps were the latest trend; we carried small square lunch boxes to school with our favorite heroes painted on the lids; and the Hotel Margaret stood in castle-like grandeur on the south westside of Silk Stocking Row.

Back in 1918, Kenneth Ross, the general manager of the Bonner Mill, decided to convert the work horse exercise yard into a community garden site, where garden plots could be rented to the mill workers for a modest fee. The huge draft animals deposited vast amounts of "Ramblers Road Apples" into the soil, and the Anaconda Company provided irrigation water and hoses. This produced unbelievable vegetable crops.

Planting season usually started when the last of the winter's snow melted from an old fire scar high up on Crystal Peak. From this moment until harvest time, the millworkers' wives demonstrated an unbelievable commitment to nurture and preserve this home grown produce. The canning process took place from mid- to late-summer, where outside temperatures approached 100 degrees F. Wood fired cook stoves in the kitchen were used to heat the water in the steam pressure cookers and hot bath boilers, which elevated the inside kitchen temperatures to unbelievable levels.

By the end of the growing season, these incredible efforts resulted in shelves of preserved vegetables which lined the walls of cellars located under many of the mill workers' houses. A favorite personal memory of this time period was Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners where families gathered to enjoy the seasonal feasts, prepared with these home canned vegetables and preserves.

Sadly, this special garden site was removed to provide space for mill expansions in an ever-growing lumber market and the art of home canned vegetables slowly dwindled until recent years. We now see Community Garden sites popping up everywhere. It has become apparent that the nutritional values in the home canning processes have improved our life styles, and enhanced the close knit family life that we enjoyed so long ago.

At this time, I would like to extend a personal thanks to my family, as well as my good friends and neighbors, Shirley (Olean) Olson and Donna (Barta) Betts for their help in recalling these great memories.

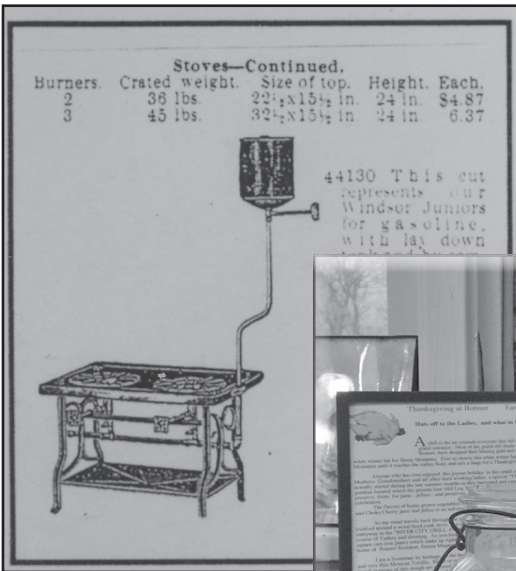
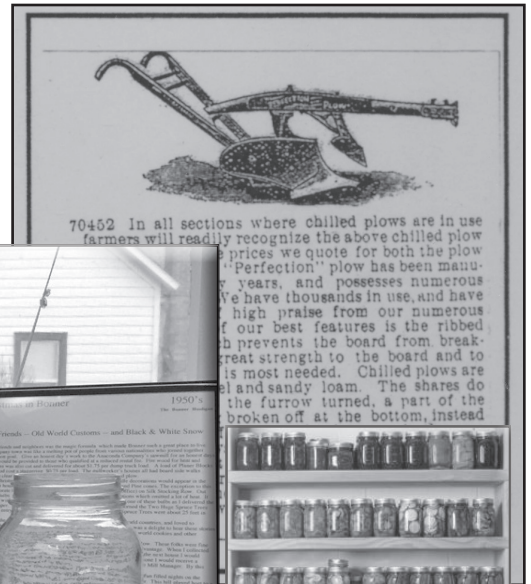


Illustration on the left illustrates the type of stove Bonner housewives may have set up outside to make canning cooler. The horse drawn plow on the right may be a type used in the first Community Gardens. Illustrations from 1918 Montgomery Ward catalog.



Many of us remember canned pickles and beets, corn, and green beans put up by our mothers and grandmothers. This new display donated by Glenn (Max) Smith pays tribute to early Bonner area homemakers.



Shelves of preserved vegetables lined the walls of cellars....

We Are Now a History Center AND Museum!

By Minie Smith

We have been lucky here at the Center this year, as we have received a number of gifts of objects pertaining to the Bonner-Milltown area as well as donations of dollars to make it possible to continue operation of the Center. Chief among these is the donation of space and utilities to house our operation from Bonner Property Development LLC (known to us as Mike Boehme and Steve Nelson). If you have not yet stopped by to see our collection, please do - we are conveniently located next to the Bonner Post Office. [see back cover for hours]

Significant additions to the Timberjack Collection came from Mike and Judy Ellis. In addition to giving us a good rate on his Timberjack memorabilia, Stan Cohen donated a valuable historic map of Riverside (Milltown).

Donations add perspective to railroads, logging camps, and forestry

Dennis Sain is writing the Anaconda Railroad and logging camp history in the Blackfoot and he and Willie Bateman both donated early railroad maps helping to document that history. Bob Lamley donated field notes and maps that he used during both the ACM and Champion eras along with many pieces of surveying equipment. Jim Poling provided a vintage Surveyor's transect as well as the box it was stored in! Tony Liane donated the map book delineated by sections used by the Rocky Mountain Office of Champion as well as Champion's detailed Forest Inventory Procedures. Tony also gave saws from his family, old tools, and a collection of the "superior" seeds used by Champion to enhance timber production. Former forester Bob LaProwse donated numerous maps that he used when working for both Champion and Anaconda. Bob Symes gave the hydro-thermograph, which he used to keep track of the weather for many years.

Views of community life illustrated by donations

We are thrilled to have one of the light fixtures from the grand Hotel Margaret donated by Kathy and Harry Mead. (see article page 5).

Glenn Smith created a canning exhibit to recall the Community Gardens and to honor the women of Bonner (see article page 2 and worth a visit). New shoes were a rarity and old shoes were resoled and worn or handed down to younger siblings. Willie Bateman donated an iron cobbler's stand with a complete set of shoe forms in different sizes. His father used scrap leather from the machine belts to mend his family's shoes as well as boots for fellow mill workers. Willie also gave a "Swede saw" (once owned by Arne Tikkenan, a Finnlander!) which was used for cutting firewood used to stoke family woodburning stoves as well as a broad axe used to square off logs for home construction and a shingle froe to split shakes for the roofs.

A photograph donated by Jim Milligan shows Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in the 1930s.

Tools, documents, and clothing offer a view into mill life

Security officer Yum Karkanian is vividly remembered by many. Jim Milligan donated the time clock used by Yum when making his rounds. Dave Otto donated saw filing tools used by Bill Beare in the Box Factory and Cal Bonnet donated the steam whistle used in the north end of the mill yard to signal log operators or millwrights and used from 1900-1970.

John Peterson gave about 20 employment cards from 1920-25 kept by ACM and the Lumbermen's Information Bureau of Montana. Alan McQuillan gave a photo of a letter from Champion written in 1972 spelling out its long range cutting plans, [to cut old growth for only the subsequent 18 years] and also a tree cookie (slice) from Seeley Lake which is now in the front window. Willie Bateman gave a belt dressing tool to repair the leather belts on the saw rigs. Willie is also creating a saw filing exhibit.

Rod Hatholter added a an ACM souvenir pen and a unique Champion cap with the logo stitched upside down. Jonathan Black gave tall caulk boots and Jim Runyan donated early Champion boundary markers, which sported a knight. Tom and Betty Hilmo gave a tree cookie, once on display in the ACM office, illustrating the growth of a 95 year old tree. They also donated a collection of early photos and a manual for a workshop on fire management.

Recalling the early days of river drives, Phil Johnson donated a long bateau oar, the kind used in the log drives of the 1920s. Mike Doerner of Home Resources donated a more modern piece: a section of glue-lam beam made at the Bonner mill. This one is unusual as it is many 1" pieces glued together suggesting that it was used in an arch (as it could be bent).

Bruce and Susan Hall loaned the Center a telephone from the Blackfoot Fire Protective Association, which is now
(cont. pg 4)

It's Time for Fundraising....

By Judy Matson

The dedication to historic preservation in Bonner Milltown is heartwarming. Little did the founding committee realize in the fall of 2008 that we would be entering 2016 as a robust contributor to saving the stories of community and work that characterized this area for more than 100 years. With your help we have collected hundreds of items, thousands of photographs, many, many stories captured in oral histories and written remembrances. The beginning of our eighth season of Roundtables in January has the fitting theme of "The Bonner Mill Site: Today and Tomorrow."

Although all of our work and most of our collections are freely given by volunteers, there is still a need for dollars to carry on our work. We have expenses for our new sign, for supplies, and for maintaining our website and website security.

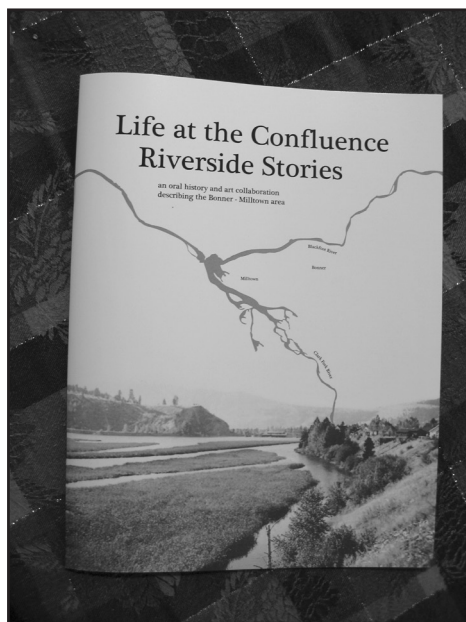
***Please help if you can by putting a tax deductible donation in the enclosed envelope and mailing it to the Center!
Checks can be written to Bonner Milltown History Center.***

(cont. from pg 3) mounted on a special stand built by Bob Starr. Connie Wilson gave us copies of Primm Meadows photos, which her husband Jim had taken in the 1990s.

Stop by for a good read on a snowy day

Our library has been increased thanks to donations from Dennis Sain, Willie Bateman, Greg Gordon, Bruce Hall, Judy Matson, Andy Lukes, Helen Meadows, and Minie Smith. We also have several albums of photos.

Many of these items came to us through the efforts of folks on the Center's committee who encouraged their friends and former co-workers to donate the items. Most of these items are currently on display.



Grant Higgins on Sheep Mountain

Lithograph by Sam Berry

Original photos from Demmons Historic Photo Collection



Bill Demmons and Grant Higgins on Sheep Mountain

Jack Demmons on Grant Higgins: "...I think he had 50 pairs of skis. He gave me one pair. I was the captain of the ski team in high school so I used them in racing. Thanks to Grant, had some steel edges - first time I had steel edges...."

Special Donation from Sam Berry

By Minie Smith

The Center has been fortunate in another way as well. Artist Sam Berry happened into the Center last year after he had completed an oral history project in Seeley Lake. He wanted to do more! The result was four additional oral histories complete with wood block prints and lithographs illustrating them.

In the fall, he had an exhibit at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula and Sam also prepared a booklet to go along with it. The stories are now compiled in a booklet – *Life at the Confluence Riverside Stories*, and Sam has generously made the proceeds available to the History Center from the sale at \$6.00 each.

Included are stories from Lois Johnson, Richard Hamma, Chuck Teague, and Jack Demmons as well as a section about Grant Higgins. The collection, complete with photos and Sam's lithographs would make a fine gift for yourself or someone on your list! Just stop by the Center and pick one up.

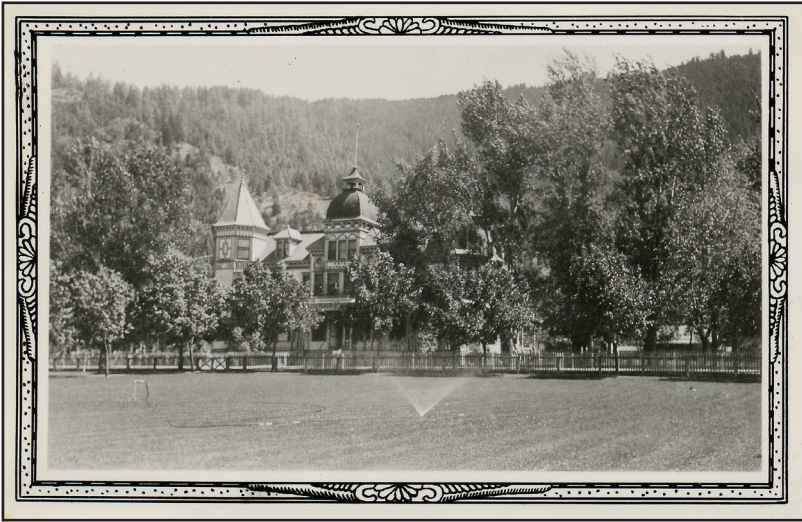
Hotel Margaret Fixture Illuminates Bonner Once Again

By Minie Smith

If you have walked or driven by the History Center recently, you will have seen a bright new light hanging in the front window. It was a light that once hung in the Hotel Margaret, possibly the library.

The Center was first alerted to the possibility of saving the light from local Bonner resident Marietta Pfister who knew the folks who had it in their house. At that time the effort came to naught. In due course, however, the house was sold and the new owners, Kathy and Harry Mead, notified the History Center of the availability of the light that they wished to return to the community through a donation to the Center.

Thanks to the effort of Center volunteers Glenn Smith, who rewired and created a structure for hanging the fixture and Gary Matson, who actually hung the light, it is now possible to see part of the Hotel Margaret just a block or so from where it originally hung.



"In 1892 the grand Hotel Margaret was constructed to house dignitaries making the long trip from Missoula and farther destinations. It featured beautifully appointed rooms and fine dining. Over the years it at times housed the post office and library and was home to single mill workers as well as families. Its demolition in 1957 is lamented to this day."

A Grass Roots Tribute. Photo from Olean Collection.



The fixture from the Hotel Margaret now illuminates the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum.

THANK YOU

We appreciate donations to the Bonner Milltown History Center this year to date. Don't see your name? Please let us know as we want to include everyone and will recognize your gift on our website and Facebook page.

Randy Alford, Bob Bateman, Willie and Alice Bateman, Jonathan Black, Bonner Development Group, Bonner Property Development LLC (Mike Boehme and Steve Nelson), Bonner School, Cal Bonnet, Amber Cadieux, Stan Cohen, Maurice and Cathi Darrington, Bill Demmons, Jack Demmons, Ralph Dufresne, Robert Dunlop, Mike and Judy Ellis, Don Felton, Marla Frick, Friends of 2 Rivers, Rick and Judy Gendrow, Greg Gordon, Joseph and Barbara Gorsh, Jim and Pat Habeck, Bruce and Susan Hall, Warren Hampton, Victor and Ilona Hangas, Rod Hocholter, Hellgate Lions Club, Edward Hettick, Jr., Tom and Betty Hilmo, Jard Hirsch, Home Resources (Mike Doerner), Ellen Leahy Howell, Clifford and Shirley Iverson, Norman Jacobson, Russell James, Bob and Lois Johnson, Betty Jo Johnson, Dale and Coby Johnson, Phil Johnson, Tom N. Johnson, Dorothy and Dale Karkanen, Robert Lamley, Paul and Peggy Layton, Sr., Lee Legreid, Rogene and Kim Lemke, Bob and Lola Mae LeProwse, Tony Liane, Land Lindbergh, Andy Lukes, Gary and Judy Matson, MCAT, Dick McEwen, Kathy and Harry Mead, Helen Meadows, Jim Milligan, Ed and Judy Olean, Shirley Olson, Wally Otterson, Dave Otto, Lavonne Otto, Doris Paulsen, Ken and Maurine Peers, John Peterson, Jr., Lefty Pleasant, Jim Poling, River City Grill (Guy Trenary), Jim Runyan, Dennis and Anna Sain, Stephen and Cathy Schombel, Brent Shaffer, Joan McClellan Sipherd, Carl Smart, Minie Smith and Alan McQuillan, Glenn and Sharon Smith, St. Ann Catholic Church, Bob and Julie Starr, Rick and Pat Swanson, Bob Symes, Jan and Bill Taylor, Don and Germaine Trenary, Karl and Sharon Uhlig, Chris Weatherly, Western Cultural, Inc. (Dan Hall), Sandy Wilborn, Jim Willis. In memory of Charlie Long: Joanne Froehlich, Rod and Randy Liebenguth, Sheila Long.

New Name Reflects Our Growth

Thanks to the support of many Bonner-Milltown history enthusiasts, our collection has grown and we have updated our name to Bonner Milltown History Center & *Museum*. Our logo (below) has been updated to reflect the change. Displays are organized into sections: the mill, logging and logging camps, the railroads, forestry, Timberjack, and community life. Interpretive signs are being added as time allows.

In the coming months, watch for a new sign on the building. Many felt it was time to upgrade our visibility and Andy Lukes is spearheading the project. A 6'x3' sign has been fabricated and Hellgate Forge is designing a frame and hanging apparatus of historic iron and chain from the mill. Your donations will help make this upgrade a reality. Many thanks!!

For the History Buff

Copies of *A Grass Roots Tribute: The Story of Bonner, Montana* are available for \$20. Proceeds go to the Bonner School history fund. Shipping available for an additional \$7.

Copies of *Life at the Confluence: Riverside Stories* by Sam Berry are available for \$6 (add \$2.50 for shipping). Sam is donating 100% of sales to the BMHC!

BonnerMilltownHistory.org Offers Local History On Demand

If you live out of town and want to know something about the Bonner mill, or missed a Roundtable program that you really wanted to attend, or enjoy listening to stories of living and working in Bonner related by old timers, visit our website bonnermilltownhistory.org. It is open 24/7 and is being constantly updated. An animated timeline map of the area's history, videos of the Roundtable programs, local history, and links to important sites such as the Demmons Collection on-line are featured. Visit bonnermilltownhistory.org today!



BMHC Is Social!

The Bonner Milltown History Center has a Facebook page. "Like" us for occasional announcements and photo albums recalling our historic past.

BMHC Volunteer Committee: Jim Willis, 258-6134; Judy Matson, 258-6335; Minie Smith, 543-5115; Dennis Sain, 549-5782; Glenn Max Smith, 825-6478; Willie Bateman, 258-6620; Lee Legreid, 549-2270; Bob Lamley, 721-6544; Rick Swanson, 549-5089; Andy Lukes, 599-5019. *We'd love to see your name here too!*

The Bonner Milltown History Center is located in the Bonner Post Office Building, 9397 Hwy 200 E., Bonner MT 59823.
Hours: Tuesday morning, 9:30 - 11:30; Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 2 - 4:30.

Bonner MT 59823
PO Box 726

