

## BONNER MILLTOWN HISTORY CENTER AND MUSEUM

*“Keeping our local area and timber heritage alive for the enjoyment and education of the public.”  
December, 2016. Photo: Early Mill from Blackfoot Bluff. Olean Photo.*

### Roundtables 2017

*Our 9th season of Roundtables has a diverse offering of topics, so mark the dates and plan to attend! Programs are at St. Ann Catholic Church in Bonner from 2– 4pm and are free and open to the public.*

**January 15: Bonner Home Makers:** Did you ever wonder what the Bonner women did all day? Until the 1970s women did not work in the mill. Nevertheless, they were very busy. Glenn Max Smith has been doing some research – even involving restoration of an old washing machine – to bring this program together. He involved his granddaughter to help him explain them to you.

**February 19: The History of Our Churches:** Join panel host Kim Briggeman and learn the “creation stories” of our community churches as told by Kim of St. Ann Catholic Church, retired Our Savior’s Pastor Carl Rohr, Hope Baptist Pastor Dan Taylor, and a panel of community members.

**March 19:** Dennis Sain will present his popular program **Logging Camps of the Anaconda Company**. Dennis has been in demand to present programs in Missoula and Seeley Lake. Now he returns “home” to share stories of this bygone feature of our timber industry. Also back by popular demand is St. Ann’s Pasty Dinner to follow. Public welcome!!!

It is our 9<sup>th</sup> season and if you missed past programs, thanks to Missoula Community Access TV, we have DVDs of them available at the Bonner Milltown History Center, or they are on YouTube. A list is on our website: [www.bonnermilltownhistory.org](http://www.bonnermilltownhistory.org).

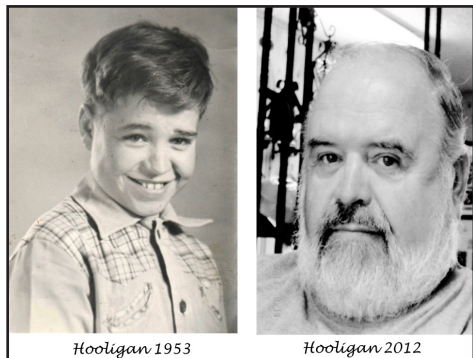
### Tuesday Morning Coffee

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

### An Honest Day's Work for an Honest Day's Pay

By Glenn (Max) Smith



Nestled between the western base of the huge Bonner Mountain and the Blackfoot River is a quaint little company town complete with rows of well-maintained mill worker houses, wooden sidewalks, and a grand old castle-like hotel. The Anaconda Company's sawmill is located alongside the Blackfoot River and provides good paying jobs for anyone interested in giving "An Honest Day's Work for an Honest Day's Pay."

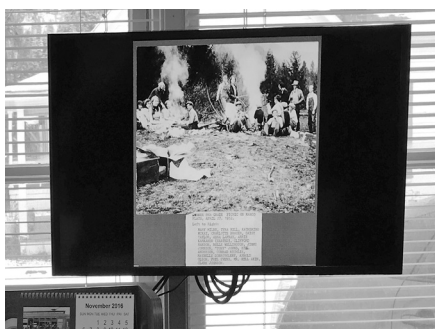
This seems to be the motto of the majority of the mill workers, but...what about a young HOOLIGAN who loves double decker orange sherbet ice cream cones?? A delicacy of this type cost a princely sum of 10¢ at the small soda fountain located where the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum is located today. Now the next Hooligan challenge is to find a good source for thin silver dimes. A notable old

friend of mine, Ben McMurray, gives me this excellent advice. He says that "if I want to dance to the tune, then I must pay the piper."

One day while walking home from school I notice one of the mill worker's houses being renovated. (This happened whenever the current occupants moved out or retired.) Outside the back door is a discarded pile of scrap lumber. In this pile is everything I need to build a heavy duty sled for hauling firewood. Winter is approaching and firewood consumption for each house is increasing. It takes about three wheelbarrow loads of wood per day to meet this demand. This proves to be quite a task for the more elderly mill workers.

My plan is to build a wheelbarrow-sized wood sled and hire out my services to anyone interested. My efforts pay off and my best customers are those who live on the west side of Highway 200. These houses have a long set of steps leading up to the back door. A work week of hauling 12 loads of firewood up these steps to fill the wood boxes puts a bit of strain on men who spend 40 hours working in the sawmill. Concerned wives hire me to fill the wood boxes for the up and coming weekends, giving their husbands a break.

Most Saturday evenings find this Hooligan kicked back in the warm surroundings of the soda fountain enjoying a double decker orange sherbet ice cream cone in the company of some very cordial waitresses and friendly customers!



### Grant Provides New Technology for the History Center

BMHC recently installed a flat screen TV and DVD-VHS player and converter thanks to a generous grant from Preserving Missoula County's History. The new equipment enables us to show programs at the Center, including Roundtables, *Timberjack*, and a recently produced video on cooking with a Dutch oven by the Hooligan Glenn Max Smith. We are also able to play slideshows created from our extensive photo collection. Many thanks to PMCH for helping us further our mission of "keeping our timber heritage alive for the enjoyment and education of the public." Thanks to Friends of Two Rivers for submitting the grant on our behalf.

### Do You Have an Anecdote or Photo to Share?

You don't have to write an encyclopedic article in order to provide a glimpse into our rich history. Simple stories or a black and white photo can tell a tale worth thousands of words. **BMHC now has equipment to transfer VHS to DVD.** If you have some videos that show life in the area, please share them! You, of course, will receive your VHS back plus a copy of the DVD.



*Thanks to your generous donations and the efforts of Andy Lukes who spearheaded the sign project, Daren Wicks and Brian Martin of Hellgate Forge who fabricated the mounting hardware, and Mike Heisey and Marla Frick who hung the sign, we have an eye-catching and welcoming invitation for passersby to stop by for a visit! Thanks to all!*

## from Memories and Short Stories

### “The Water Wheel”

By Willie Bateman



*Ed Labbe, Sam Bateman, and Emil Nelson with Dad's water wheel in 1937.*

Our second summer in the river bottom Dad built a water wheel out of an old wooden spoke car wheel with the axle still attached. This in turn was bolted to a large pine log with U bolts. He put extensions on the spokes made out of two by fours and made paddles and boxes out of boards. The whole thing was raised and lowered into the river with a block and tackle and the water was ditched out to the garden. It worked like a dream.

We raised a big garden out on the river bank for two summers and during this time he hand dug a root cellar, walled it up with railroad ties, and put on a tie roof covered with dirt. Come fall it was full of potatoes, fruit jars full of garden stuff, squash, and canned venison. There's one thing I can say for sure, and this is it: I might have had patches on my knees and butt, but I never went away from a table hungry.

We were in the river bottom for about two years when Dad dug a well by hand right in back of the house, got a hand pump, and put it in. Boy, this was like living “Uptown.” No more carrying water from the river and the spring. The only thing was you had to make sure the tea kettle and water pail were filled up at night in the winter because you had to pour hot water down the pump rod to thaw it out before you could get water in the morning.

### A Visit with Iva Rose Mackenzie

By Dennis Sain and Judy Matson

Dennis and Anna Sain, Minnie Smith, and Judy Matson visited with Iva Rose Mackenzie recently. Iva Rose's father, Don Mackenzie, was one of two principal men involved in the overall operation of the Anaconda Company logging operation, managing the Company logging crews which at one time included around 600 men and 200 to 300 horses.

C.W. McEwen started in 1911 at Trout Creek near Superior, Montana. In 1912 he was sent to the Camas operation (Potomac) to take over as purchasing agent. He met Don MacKenzie who was a laborer and suggested he take the cruiser position. MacKenzie did. Mackenzie and McEwen subsequently managed timber operations out of Headquarters Camp at Woodworth. Mackenzie became the “Bull of the Woods” or logging superintendent. The two “Macs” ran the company logging operation successfully for 44 years. Both retired in 1957.

Born in Missoula, Iva Rose lived with her family in Greenough and she attended first grade at Sunset School. She shares this picture of herself and Dick McEwen as children in Greenough in 1931. The family then moved to Woodworth and lived there until Iva Rose graduated from eighth grade from Woodworth School. She moved to Missoula with her mother to attend high school. Her father remained at Woodworth, joining the family in Missoula on weekends.

Iva Rose recalls that her father never discussed work at home. She grew up playing with the other children or by herself, enjoying her large doll collection. When they moved, Iva Rose's mother encouraged her to keep just two dolls, her first and her last. She still has those dolls. Many thanks to Iva Rose for sharing these and more stories and for allowing us to copy your photos!



## Round Up of 2016 Donations to the History Center!

By Minie Smith

We continue to be lucky at the Center once again as we have received many gifts pertaining to Bonner-Milltown's past as well as donations of dollars which make it possible to continue operation. Chief among these is the donation of space and utilities from Bonner Property Development LLC, aka Mike Boehme and Steve Nelson. Reading this extensive list you can easily see the great variety of items that have come to the Center. We are grateful for all these gifts and hope that readers will continue to share more items with us.

### Dam Documentation and Gun Mystery Solved

Daren Wicks at Hellgate Forge donated pieces of an old firearm he found in the Blackfoot River. Intrigued, Norman Jacobson was instrumental in piecing together the type of firearm with help from gun experts at Traveler's Rest. Norman also shared his photos of the Milltown and Bonner Dam removals which he had carefully documented. In addition to all the newspaper articles that Jack Demmons has provided us, he also donated a copy of Walter Hook's art and the background behind an article in the magazine, *Timberman* in 1936 entitled "50 Years at Bonner." Jonathan Black donated a wool jacket worn by his father and a photo of him wearing it as well as an early 1900s oak box from the Twin Creek Logging Camp. Rod Hochhalter donated actual ACM files from the 1950s Warehouse records.

### Original *Timberjack* Obtained, Early Mill Items

Kim Briggeman gave us the missing *Timberjack* link: the original novel by Dan Cushman on which the movie was based! As well, he donated two books by Emil Petaja who grew up in Bonner. We received a number of items from Bob LeProwse, before he died, relating to the early history of the mill under both Anaconda and Champion. Bob was the District Forester and Personnel and Safety Manager from Anaconda and Champion. Sam Berry donated a copy of *Camus*, whose cover featured Sam's woodcut of Bill Dahlman, a logger from Bonner. Jerry and MaryAnn Buckhouse donated a number of correspondence items and photos related to Anaconda and Champion's ownership of the mill. We continue cataloguing their extensive gift, so more details later!

### Books and Household Items

Dennis Sain has contributed several thermos bottles with glass liners, 2 metal bottle openers, and a ladies buttonhook as well as two early irons. He and Bill Demmons helped solve the mystery of the Red Bridges over the Blackfoot River (see page 7). Judy Matson has added to our library with books from Seeley Lake. Minie Smith also added a book about Frenchtown and a copy of a letter from ACM (original in the UM Archives). Donna Betts gave a metal colander and canning jars used by her mother in Bonner. Glenn Smith has donated the DVD he made for his roundtable program on the Bonner Home Makers and another on cooking with a Dutch oven.

### Mill Items

Rick Swanson donated a cardholder from Anaconda and some historic photos including ones which show him getting an award and the Warehouse crew where he worked for many years. Willie Bateman donated a meat cleaver used by ACM butcher Ed Labbe, a tobacco plug cutter, and several items from his mother's kitchen including 2 irons, an apple peeler, a food grinder, and a wooden washboard. Lee Legreid's contributions included several color photos of head rigs that he worked on at White Pine Sash and an early log loader. Brent Schafer added a McKay photo of the mill and a 1949 photo of the Bonner mill as well as an additional copy of Bob Bateman's booklet on the Big Blackfoot Railway. Lois Johnson gave a large black and white photo of the mill in the 1940s.

### More about Railroading and Measuring Trees

From Wally Otterson came a magazine of the Northern Pacific RR which contained an article about Bonner. Ken McMillan donated a scaling ruler from the west coast. (For the larger trees that grew there: it is 5 feet long!) Bob Lamley added to our map collection with maps of the Blackfoot River and Lolo National Forest (1974). Lavonne Otto donated a scrapbook of articles about the area from 1973-2009 plus pins and papers of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners which had belonged to Bill Beare who worked at the mill for many years. Paul Layton donated a poster commemorating the community effort to Save the Black Bridge and Bonner Development Group donated posters of their projects, including moving the Mullan statue.

### Logging References Added

Following our Roundtable last winter on the History of Logging in Montana, Scott Kuehn donated the *Chronology of*

## **Preserving the Past with an Eye to the Future....**

***“What are we going to be doing in 5 years? In 10 years?”***

By the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum Committee (see names, page 8)

The home of the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum is nearly perfect. We are snugly tucked into a building that has represented the history of Bonner since 1942 and we share the building with the Bonner Post Office on busy Highway 200. Even better, Bonner Property Development LLC (known to us as Mike Boehme and Steve Nelson) provides the donation of space and utilities to house our operation. We're a little squeezed for space, but mainly wholly contented here.

Recently, an astute committee member asked the question: “What are we going to be doing in 5 years? In 10 years?” Time does, indeed, fly. In our eight years we have collected and cataloged hundreds of items, thousands of photographs, and priceless stories captured in oral histories and written remembrances.

Our community has experienced changes undreamed of in the days of ACM. Major changes caught us by surprise, nearly plunging our timber heritage into obscurity; thankfully, a thriving mill site with new businesses exists today and Bonner Milltown historic preservation is alive and well.

However, it is time to prepare our preservation efforts for the future. There are many possibilities: acquiring land in or near Bonner and adding a structure, purchasing a local building, partnering with others who may be interested in starting a senior citizens center....

That decision doesn't need to be made right away, but starting a development fund does. To date, all of our work and most of our collections are freely given by volunteers, and our expenses, thanks to our benefactors, are modest: buying supplies and maintaining our website, for example.

This giving season and going forward, we invite you to join us in preparing for the future through your monetary donations. In addition to giving operation and maintenance dollars, please consider getting details as our plans develop and giving a development gift.

Minie's father often observed, “Having an idea is worth 5¢; accomplishing that idea is where the 95¢ value lies. Let's make this project worth the whole dollar!

***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.***

## **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, Donna and Lowell Anderson, Dick Anthony, Willie Bateman, Russell and Roberta Bemis, Sam Berry, Donna Betts, Jonathan Black, Mike Boehme, Bonner Development Group, Bonner Property Development LLC, Kim Briggeman, Tom and Tomi Briggeman, Jerry and Mary Ann Buckhouse, Bud Clarke, Stan Cohen, Bill and Peggy Colwell, Bill Demmons, Jack Demmons, Ralph Dufresne, Robert Dunlop, Don Felton, Marla Frick, Friends of Two Rivers, Rick and Judy Gendrow, Jim and Pat Habeck, Victor and Ilona Hangas, Hellgate Forge, Mike Heisey, Jim and Edna Hill, Jard Hirsch, Clifford Iverson, Norman Jacobson, Dale Jacobson, Lois Johnson, Tom Johnson, Allen and Laurie Kallis, Scott Kuehn, Robert Lamley, Robin Lamley, Libby Langston, Ellen Leahy, Lee Legreid, Bob LeProwse, Lola Mae LeProwse, Keith Lerback, Tony Liane, Land Lindbergh, Kathryn Lobdell, Sheila Long in honor of Charlie Long, Iva Rose MacKenzie, Brian Martin, Addrien Marx, Jim Maser, Judy and Gary Matson, Pat McDonald, Dick McEwen, Ken McMillan, Alan McQuillan, Eugene Miller, Elaine Nagle, Mike and Linda Nelson, Steve Nelson, Charles Nyquest, Ed and Judy Olean, Stan and Doreen Olean, Shirley Olson, Wally Otterson, Lavonne Otto, John Peterson, Dennis Pleasant, Marcia Porter, Jean Remes, Dennis and Anna Sain, Brent Shafer, Joan McClellan Sipherd, Jen Slayden, Minie Smith, Glenn Max and Sharon Smith, Mona Bryant Smith, St. Ann Catholic Church, Rick and Pat Swanson, Don and Germaine Trenary, Karl and Sharon Uhlig, Bill and Kris Unger, Alan and Karen Wagner, Chris Weatherly, Darren Wicks, Sandra Lee Wilborn, Jimmie Willis in honor of Alice Bateman, and to all of our anonymous donors. Thanks too to the Tuesday morning coffee group for your support!



THE BONNER LEGACY  
WALTER HOOK  
1919-1989

## Gifts from Bonner Development Group and Sam Berry Benefit BMHC

Milltown native, Bonner School alumnus, and renowned artist Walter Hook painted “The Bonner Legacy,” a mural depicting the close relationship between the mill and Bonner School. The Bonner Development Group had prints of the mural produced. According to a 2005 *Missoulian* story by Rob Cheney, “Hook was born in the Bonner-Milltown community in 1919 and attended Bonner School. He painted the 30-foot-long mural of life and activity in a timber town in 1959, in the early part of his career as a University of Montana art professor.” BDG has donated the remaining prints, suitable for framing, to BMHC and they are available for \$10 each.

As reported last year, artist Sam Berry produced a booklet entitled *Life at the Confluence Riverside Stories*, containing four oral histories complete with wood block prints and lithographs illustrating them. Included are stories from Lois Johnson, Richard Hamma, Chuck Teague, and Jack Demmons as well as a section about Grant Higgins. Sam has generously made the proceeds from book sales available to the History Center. Just stop by the Center and pick one up for \$5 or mail a check made out to Bonner Milltown History Center for \$7.50 and receive it by mail. Be sure to include the address where the book is to be sent!

## Round Up of 2016 Donations to the History Center! (cont. from page 4)

*Conservation and Forestry in Montana*, a history of the High Wheels (at UM), and a copy of the questions asked on the 1908 Forest Ranger Exams. In the reference department, Marcia Porter, retired Records Management Supervisor for the County, provided us with a list of deeds related to Bonner from Missoula County. Bud Clarke, a participant in the Smokejumpers Roundtable gave the Center a copy of the “Fireline Blasters Guidebook.” Jim Habeck donated a copy of the DVD he had made of the Hammond Roundtable in 2016.

## Transportation, Sandpaper, and Spikes

Jim Maser donated a photo of Lou Parker and his Blackfoot Stage in 1926 and a short article about the stage. We also received a donation of a roll of sandpaper which came from the mill from a retired shop teacher at Sentinel HS. Elaine Nagle gave us a copy of an old map of Milltown. Alan McQuillan donated rail spikes from Nine Mile Prairie, from the old ACM logging railroad days, as well as some shorter mine rail spikes. Jim Willis brought in early photos of Bonner and Iva Rose Mackenzie let us copy her photo album containing photos of her life through 8th grade in the Woodworth Logging Camp.

## Thanks to Our Volunteers

So many folks help make the History Center tick, and we just wanted to acknowledge their support and help. Jim Willis every Tuesday offers coffee and conversation and specially baked cookies to a growing group of folks who regularly come to the Center. When we needed a volunteer to shepherd our new sign into reality, Andy Lukes stepped in and guided it through the process. Hellgate Forge donated the mounting and Mike Heisey and Marla Frick provided the actual hanging. Glenn Smith, Dennis Sain and Kim Briggeman have volunteered to host this season’s Roundtables. In addition to donating artifacts, Willie Bateman, Lee Legreid, Rick Swanson, and Bob Lamley are always around to provide support and offer answers to our many questions. We appreciate their support and friendship!

Judy and Minie

## Red Bridges Over the Blackfoot

By Bill Demmons with an Introduction by Minnie Smith

The old timers talk about them - and argue about the number of them: 4 or 5 or 6? Where exactly were they located on the Blackfoot? These questions came up at Tuesday morning coffee and the discussion was off. Summer visitor Bill Demmons spearheaded tracking down of the facts. Here is what he found. As to why they were all painted red? It appears that the Highway Department had an overabundance of red lead oxide paint which was preferred as it lasted longer than regular paint.

If you would like to see the maps that Bill obtained, stop by the Center! Here's the story from Bill:

In the early 1900's, a dirt road ran along the Blackfoot River from Bonner to the Clearwater Junction area. Due to the many natural barriers bordering the river, five bridges were constructed over the 50-mile stretch, providing "detours" that bypassed the most severe of those barriers. The bridges were painted red, and were called "The Five Red Bridges on the Blackfoot."

The first bridge crossed the river a few miles upstream from Bonner, a detour onto Marco Flats on the north side of the river, necessitated by the Big Blue Slide, a long, steep, cascade of gravel, stone, and occasionally, trees, that spilled into the river. From Marco Flats, the old road ran along the north side of the river to a point across from the LaFray farmstead, where rocky outcrops required bridging back to more level ground on the south side. From there, the road ran upriver to a point across the river from the Wisherd farm, where steep cliffs on the south side forced the county to construct the third red bridge that carried traffic to the north side of the river again.

From Wisherd Creek, the road followed the Milwaukee's logging railroad to McNamara's Landing where large rocky outcrops upriver required another bridge, the fourth, taking the roadway back to the south bank, from where it crossed Bear Creek and ran along the foothills to the small ranching community, Potomac. From there, the road ran northeast through the Greenough Gap where the Anaconda Copper Mining Company had located a major logging operation.

The road then dropped into the wide valley occupied by the Morris Ranch. (Lindbergh, Paws Up). It crossed Elk Creek and then moved over to the Blackfoot River, following its course upstream, passing under the bench where the E-L Guest Ranch is located.

At the confluence of the Blackfoot and Clearwater Rivers, a fifth bridge was built to take the road away from rugged terrain on the south side of the Blackfoot, to the north side again, from where it ran to the area of today's Clearwater Junction. The road branched there, one fork trended due north to the Seeley Lake country, and the other fork took the road to Ovando.

As a footnote: Three hotels once catered to travelers on the road along the Blackfoot River. One was located in Potomac, one was built on the flat at McNamara's Landing (There was a saloon under the bridge at McNamara's Landing) and there was a "hotel" at the fifth red bridge, on the north side of the river.

The road with the five red bridges cut the travel time by auto between Missoula and Ovando to a few hours. Before the road and the bridges were in place, the trip by horse and wagon required several days travel in each direction.

The fifth red bridge at the confluence of the Blackfoot and the Clearwater Rivers is the only one of the five still intact and in use. It carries a fair amount of vehicular traffic, including many fishermen/women, including those from the E-L and Paws Up Guest ranches.

### Help needed!

**We need the names of donors for two items received this year. One is a set of black and white photos of the Bonner shays. The other is a roll of sandpaper. If you donated one of these items, or know who did, please let us know! Email at [bonnermilltownhistorycenter@gmail.com](mailto:bonnermilltownhistorycenter@gmail.com) or call Judy at (406) 370-5929. Thank you!**

## 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](http://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](http://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, 370-5929
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

