



BONNER MILLTOWN HISTORY CENTER AND MUSEUM

*“Keeping our local area and timber heritage alive for the enjoyment and education of the public.”
December, 2017. Photo: Rich, Karen, and Ken Hamma pulled on a sled in Bonner, 1956. Hamma Photo.*

Search reveals whereabouts of childhood home of 101-year-old Canadian lady

It was an ordinary day with an extraordinary surprise in store. A routine check of our email yielded an intriguing request from a website visitor in British Columbia, Canada:

“My grandfather’s name was DAVID WEIR. I’m not sure how long he had worked there before my grandmother ISABELLA moved to Bonner. Their daughters were DAISY ISABEL, born May 31, 1914 in Bonner and MARJORIE JEANNETTE (named after Jeannette Rankin) born June 7, 1916 in Bonner. The family left in 1919.”

Minie delved into the Polk Directories and, sure enough, David Weir was listed first as a teamster, then as a watchman, and finally as a teamster again beginning in 1911. He disappeared from the record in 1918. (The Polk Directory was issued every two years.)

This revelation was met with appreciation and a follow-up question: did we have any idea of where David Weir had lived while working at the mill?

Thanks to the Hooligan, aka Glenn Smith, we did! Glenn

has compiled an atlas of all of the Bonner houses including a list of occupants from the earliest residents up through the 50s and 60s. Research on this project was aided significantly by the Bonner Company Town Historic District application prepared by Western Cultural, Inc.



This house has been home to many generations since it was built in early 1900.

Judy went up the street to take some photos of the house to send to Ms. Fabritius. Soon came the reply:

“I am so excited to show my mother (who is 101 years old) as she was born in that house as was my late aunt.

“I’m going to go through Mum’s album as I think there is a photo of them in front of that house. Also, I think there is a photo of them sitting on a donkey. *Mum told me years ago that a man came to Bonner with a donkey and people paid to have their kids*

photographed on the donkey. Have you ever heard of that?

“The only time Mum visited Bonner after they left was in 1959 or 1960. We didn’t know which house they had lived in and had no idea it was still standing. What a wonderful find!

“If you are able to pass on to the volunteer (Hooligan) who researched and wrote the booklet that the information about the

See House continued on page 2

See the Roundtable schedule on page 10.

The Hooligan speaks to P.E.O. International

Rosie the Riveter meets Paul Bunyan

By The Hooligan

My memories of living in Bonner and working at the Bonner Mill spanned a time period of over 50 years which enabled me to experience nearly every adventure known to modern man. One day in particular, I was savoring a Tom Sawyer/Huckleberry Finn shenanigan when it dawned on me that all my memories seemed to be centered around **Where The Men Worked!!!** What about the countless contributions made by the Bonner Area Homemakers?

On May 21, 2008 the Stimson Lumber Company announced their intentions to close the Grand Old Bonner Mill. I simply could not let the memories of this unique little Company Town, and all it represents, fade away. I was eventually overjoyed to learn that two very amazing ladies had organized a History Center, dedicated to keeping our local area and timber heritage alive for the enjoyment and education of the public.

Now was my chance to point out a few of the many ways Wives and Homemakers worked alongside their husbands to create this memorable little community. This year I was invited as a guest speaker at a women's club called P.E.O. The best way to describe this organization is through their mission statement. They are a philanthropic organization, where women celebrate the achievements of women through scholarships, grants, awards, loans, stewardship of Cottey College and motivate women to achieve their highest aspirations.

Oh my God!!! Can I actually do this??? I have always enjoyed conducting Safety Meetings, teaching C.P.R., and advanced First Aid courses. For a time during my military service, I was an instructor at an Infantry Communications school in Fort Ord, California. My language in each of these roles could be a little crude to say the least. This was pointed out to me by a little third grade student visiting our History Center. He cautioned me about the use of "Bad Words."

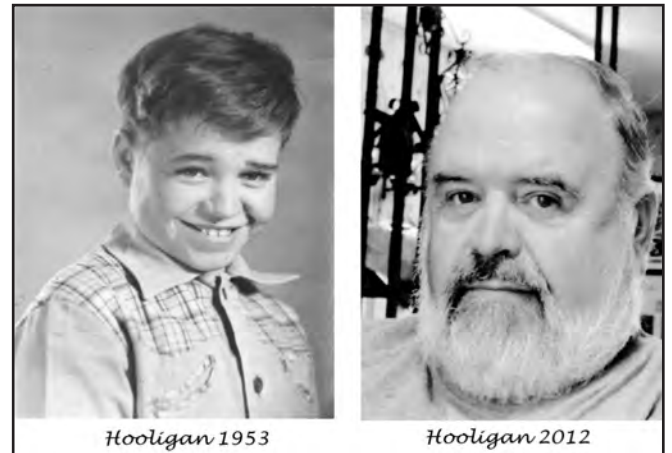
A Paul Bunyan World

You can't imagine how relieved I was to hear that the P.E.O. ladies allowed me 45 minutes of their meeting time to speak about women in the work force at the Bonner Mill, and I offered up a silent prayer to not embarrass myself by using sawmill language during this time frame. I chose to talk about the Anaconda Company's policy for employee rentals

House, continued from page 1

house is particularly meaningful to us as my mother was born in the house."

And a final message: "I just wanted to tell you that I visited my mother on Sunday and took my laptop to show her these photos. It was one of her really good days and her eyes just lit up when she saw the photos. She said, 'Imagine!! 101 years old



of company housing. It stated that any man who worked at Bonner Mill could rent a house for his family at a reduced rental fee for as long as he worked for the Company. If that individual either quit or retired from the work force, the house was to be refurbished for a new qualified mill worker to rent. The Catch 22 was what to do about a worker's wife and family if the husband died unexpectedly? Inevitably, the situation arose.

Enter Rosie the Riveter

A good friend of mine and member of the White House secretarial staff suggested, "Let's offer the wife the opportunity to become a laborer in the work force." This concept was received with mixed emotions and put into effect during the late 1960s. During this time the Anaconda Company implemented a huge million dollar up-date to their manufacturing processes.

Modern machinery replaced many of the old "labor intensive" machines which paved the way to allow women a chance to successfully participate in the work force. This modernized facility needed machine operators with quick and accurate "Hand-Eye Coordination" to operate the new machines at peak capacity. My good friend, neighbor, and fellow worker handled every challenge for working in an all-male work force. It should be noted that she did this "as well as-or better than" many of the guys she worked with. Eventually more women entered the Bonner Mill work force and performed exceptionally well within their chosen job descriptions.

and finally being able to see a photo of where you were born. Isn't that amazing?" She got quite a kick when I told her that it is now part of an historic area."

(Stay tuned: Ms. Fabritius is checking to see if the photos of the house they have can be enhanced. If so, she will send us photos of House 68 when it was brand new!)

Special projects add depth to memories of a past way of life

Volunteers add to our knowledge of Bonner area

One of the highlights of volunteering at the History Center is listening to the stories told by volunteers with a lifetime of experience living here. Some stories are captured on recordings, but many flit passed, enjoyed but not recorded. Often, volunteers, sparked by long forgotten memories, create lasting records of past places. We have noted the value of the history of the Bonner houses produced by Glenn Max (Hooligan) Smith. (*see related story, page 1*)

This year three significant contributions on different subjects were produced. Dennis Sain compiled his extensive research into a book on the logging railroads and A.C.M. camps up the Blackfoot. It is available in our library and online.

The Milwaukee houses

The Hooligan has first-hand knowledge of the Milwaukee houses in Bonner, having grown up in one. But most people are unaware of their existence. This important but little known piece of our past is now recorded in an illustrated history of the Milwaukee houses. Watch for it on the website or see it in person at the History Center.

Bonner lore is rich with stories of Bonner School, yet memories of the first school remain only in the pages of *A Grass Roots Tribute: The Story of Bonner, Montana* along with a lone photo of the building. Recently Jimmie Willis found a photo showing

the mill with the back of the building in the foreground. Bonner Hall, which served also as the Masonic Hall, the office of the Blackfoot Fire Protection Association (BFPA), a meat market, meeting space for several organizations, and a residence, was torn down in the early 1940s. (*See photo, page 7.*)

Floorplan mapped

The final eighth grade class at the second Bonner School, located on the present day school grounds, graduated in the class of 1957-58. Stories and pictures of the school remain, but exactly how the school was laid out has never been recreated. Until now. Willie Bateman, relying on memory of eight years of learning in that building and helped by others, has created drawings of the layout of the basement and two upper floors.

It is planned to have this information along with photos of the classes and the second school become part of a notebook on the school.

Is there a project for you?

Have you noticed a theme? We have lots of information and photos and dreams of documenting these important parts of our heritage. If working on any of these projects or one of your own strikes your fancy, please let us know! We are eager to share the satisfaction of helping to keep the Bonner area's history alive.



Above: There are many photos of the second Bonner School (right) and classes, and now, thanks to Willie Bateman, we have a diagram of the floorplan. Students, 1946. Rick Swanson photo.



Above, right: This photo from the Olean family shows the "Roundhouse" of earlier days. The streetcar provided transportation for mill workers.



Right: The Bonner Post Office and Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum have an updated look thanks to remodeling undertaken by owners Steve Nelson and Mike Boehme.

Back to the future? Volunteers mentor Bonner first graders

By Judy Matson

Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum's volunteers headed back to first grade at Bonner School this spring, not as students, but as teachers. Mentors Norman Jacobson, Willie Bateman, Andy Lukes, and Glenn Max (Hooligan) Smith assisted first grade teacher Kristin Vogel with her unit "History of Bonner." They do admit to learning a lot too and marveled at the energy they once must have had as six-year-olds.

Native Americans

Norman and Willie each presented a program on Native American use of the area. Norman demonstrated toys and tools to the inquisitive group who loved touching and trying out the exhibits. Willie sparked an interest in finding arrow heads (points) and stone tools when he told them stories of discovering such treasures in the neighborhood, including showing a stone hammer he found right on the school grounds when he was in fourth grade at Bonner School.

Forestry

Next Andy Lukes introduced them to the characteristics of trees: needles, bark, cones, and growth rings, noting that trees are like us in that they need good nutrition, water, and a healthy place to grow even though, unlike people, they must remain rooted in one place. The class, led by Andy, then headed out for a rainy day nature walk in back of the school where they identified examples of what Andy had explained in the classroom. Andy

Norman Jacobson, Willie Bateman, Andy Lukes, and Glenn Smith shared Bonner history with Kristin Vogel's first graders.



invited them to "hug a tree" to get an idea of how big it was and several students did just that. In addition, when it was time to say goodbye, several students hugged Andy as well and thanked him for coming.

Home life

In the final class, the Hooligan returned to Bonner School, site of many of his past pranks. Under the watchful eye of his wife and assistant Sharon, he told the stories of home life in Bonner without a slip of the tongue, describing waking to the aromas of breakfast, finishing chores, and hurrying to school at the sound of the bell. Students were unaware that once clothes weren't just discarded but were mended and had buttons sewn on many times, and each child delighted in selecting his/her own button from a "button box" like the ones so common in early day homes. The most fascinating activity for the class? Turning a hand cranked coffee grinder and discovering - and, occasionally tasting - the aromatic ground coffee collected in the drawer.

The mill

The BMHC also contributed videos of how the mill operated back when most first graders had fathers, uncles, and grandfathers at work in the mill across the street from the school. The class also took a history walk to the History Center where they experienced more mementos of Bonner's past.

THANK YOU

We appreciate all the support the Bonner Milltown History Center has received this year to date. If you don't see your name, please let us know as we want to include everyone and will recognize your support on our website and Facebook pages.

Al, Randy Alford, Clark Anderson, Donna Anderson, Willie Bateman, Bob Bateman, Russell and Roberta Bemis, Steve Bixby, Richard Black, Jonathan Black, Mike Boehme, Bonner Property Development, Kim Briggeman, Tom and Tomi Briggeman, Joe Brown, MaryAnn and Jerry Buckhouse, Jerold Caluori, Stan Cohen, Shirley Cuplin, Maurice and Cathi Darrington, Bill Demmons, Jack Demmons, Ralph and Joan Dufresne, Robert Dunlop, Don Felton, Friends of Two Rivers, Rick and Judy Gendrow, Jim and Pat Habeck, Marcia Hall, Dan Hall, Western Cultural, Vic and Ilona Hargas, Janice Hartung, Robert Henderson, Jard Hirsch, Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, Les and Sue Iverson, Norman Jacobson, Tony and Joan Jasumback, Tom Johnson, Thom Keith, Albert and Norma Knudson, Mike Kustudia, Jim and Don Labbe, Bob Lamley, Libby Langston, Lee Legreid, Lola May LeProwse, Land Lindbergh, Sheila Long, in memory of Charlie Long, Andy Lukes, Iva Rose MacKenzie, Judy and Gary Matson, MCAT, Pat McDonald, Dick and Pat McEwen, Alan McQuillan, Steve Nelson, Bonner Property Development, Peter Nielsen, Ted Nyquest, Shirley Olson, Wally Otterson, Dave Otto, Hal Padden, Ken and Maureen Peers, Walter Peckham, Lefty Pleasant, Jim Runyon, Dennis and Anna Sain, Steve Schombel, Brent Shaffer, Dick Shimer, Joan Sipherd, Minie Smith, Mona Bryant Smith, Glenn Smith (aka the Hooligan), St. Ann Catholic Church, Mary Ellen Stubb, Rick and Pat Swanson, Guy Trenary, River City Grill, UM Archives and Special Collections, George and Kristine Unger, Alan and Karen Wagner, Chris Weatherly, Sandra Wilborn, Jimmie Willis, Danya Zimmerman and all of our anonymous donors. Thanks too to the Tuesday morning coffee group for your support!

Hellgate Lions' departure signals the end of a community institution

By Judy Matson

The community said farewell to the Hellgate Lions International Club at the end of 2016. After 51 years of community service and despite many membership campaigns, the club found it difficult to recruit new members and the outcome was inevitable.

Voices from *A Grass Roots Tribute, The Story of Bonner, Montana*, published in 1976, remind us of the Hellgate Lions' legacy: "When the Lions Club was organized in Bonner, we [George's Cafe] catered the banquet, which was served in the Bonner School dining room. The club met every other Tuesday at the cafe at 6:30 A.M. for a breakfast meeting." Clara Buckhouse, pg. 26.

A more complete history was offered by Jack L. Demmons:

The Hellgate Lions Club was chartered in April, 1965, with a total of 15 members. The names of these individuals are:

Frank Bauer, Lawrence Burlingame, Albert Dufresne, Martin Briggeman, Archie Cram, Howard Ellis, Marshall Brondum, Robert Deschamps, Jr., Earl Fuller, George Buckhouse, William Disbrow, Richard Greil, Harold Henderson, John McClellan, Leo Musburger, Leo Riley, Chester Sanders, Frederick Sherwood, Wilfred Thibodeau, Harry Vasser, and Dennis Pleasant. It was organized by Mr. Jimmie Graehl, and the formation of the club was sponsored by the Southside Lions Club of Missoula.

Area activities in the past have included the sponsoring of the local Rural Fire Department, provision of glasses and eye exams where individuals could not afford them, the purchase of food for needy families, sponsoring of the yearly Old Timers Party at the Bonner School, erection of a rest area at Lafray Creek in the lower Blackfoot Canyon, and the cosponsoring of Little League baseball teams.

Different projects the club has been involved in have been funded through the sale of light bulbs, brooms, and the production of Christmas tree stands.

This year the club sponsored for the first time a nonconference basketball tournament, involving the Bonner School "A" squad, and teams from DeSmet, Florence and Seeley Lake. This will now be an annual event.

The club meets every first and third Tuesday morning at 7:30 A.M. Presently the meetings are being held in a club room at the back of Harold's Club in Milltown. For years the meetings were in the Bonner restaurant [George's Cafe] until its closure in 1975. "Hellgate Lions Club" by Jack L. Demmons, pg. 102.

The Lions' commitment to service didn't end in 1976 – far from it. Looking for a home for a community center, in 1977

the Lions met with Ellen Zimmerman who offered a portion of her property (the old Zaugg ranch in West Riverside.) After negotiations and with financial backing from Missoula County, the Lions invested the earnings from thousands of Christmas tree stands to purchase 16+ acres. The club got to work creating Little League baseball fields and a playground.

But what of the historic barn on the property? Could it be converted into a community center building? It could and it was. Again with support from Missoula County, the Lions invested money and muscle, removing the lower portion of the barn,

leaving the current meeting room level and an upstairs storage room, originally the hay loft. The interior was renovated with the majority of work donated by Lions members.

As the years passed, the Lions continued supporting Little League and, later,

Missoula Youth Football. They still provided eyeglasses for the needy and distributed holiday food baskets. An annual Easter Egg Hunt for area children was started in 2000 and has the reputation of being the nicest hunt around.

But times changed. No one used wooden Christmas tree stands any more, nor lightbulbs or brooms from the door-to-door salesmen. And even if they had, members hadn't time to dedicate a night a week year round to making the stands or going door-to-door.

In late 2016 the Lions board contacted Friends of Two Rivers, a local volunteer group whose mission is promoting a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for the communities at the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers. Would the group assume responsibility for the park?

Missoula County Trails and Parks was contacted, and after reviewing documents of the original transaction, received the property which reverted to County ownership if the Hellgate Lions ever disbanded. Friends of Two Rivers, Inc. was appointed as trustee of the property.

Today Hellgate Lions Park is managed much as the Hellgate Lions Club members had envisioned – as a community park and center. The Easter Egg Hunt remains as a cooperative project of Friends of Two Rivers, the Milltown Moose Lodge #2714, and the Outdoor Life Ministries Church. Information about the park and rentals is at www.hellgatelionspark.com/

But 51 years of the community service the Hellgate Lions offered can't just be transferred. The Lions roar is silenced and it will be missed.



Round up of 2017 donations to the History Center - Collections grow dramatically!

By Minie Smith

More than 97 objects and many photos have come into the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum's collections through November this past year thanks to the generosity of more than 30 donors. We are grateful that so many folks are willing to share these mementoes of the local past. Several folks have lent objects to the Center for exhibits and scanning.

Dennis Sain contributed several maps from the 1930s of the Woodworth Lumber Camp, one of the ACM's logging camps up the Blackfoot. He also contributed materials on Millwrights in the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (1954), the program of the Awards dinner in 1970 in which he was honored for 10 years of service to the ACM, and a razor. In addition, Dennis donated a blank order form for Bob Bateman's book *Big Blackfoot Railway*. Dennis and his wife Anna were responsible for a large donation of photos from Iva Rose MacKenzie, daughter of Don MacKenzie.

Glenn Smith donated several items: a photo of a map used in the January, 2017 Bonner Homemakers Roundtable (# 24), a Champion Newsletter from 1989 with a proposed new logo, a letter to laid-off employees, and two of his pay stubs from the 1970s as well as receipts for union dues.

Alan McQuillan donated a slice of a spruce tree, known as a cookie, from Seeley Lake given to him by his forestry predecessor Bill Pierce at the University of Montana. Minie Smith gave two articles on the Milltown Dam from 1923. Otis Seal donated a tree planter. Judy Matson donated a 2016 calendar which she had had made for the volunteers, using photos from the Demmons and BMHC Collections.

Willie Bateman donated four union dues booklets and a white enamel pitcher used by his mother and later by Willie and his wife Alice. He also gave a "handy calculator" for wood measurements and screw sizes. Willie, from his memory, drew a diagram of the interior of the second school in Bonner, which was used from 1907 to 1956. Willie graduated from the 8th grade in 1945. Our intent is to use the plan as part of a booklet about the school. He also donated two old photo-cards of the Seeley Lake Stage, one of tipis in Hellgate Canyon and one of a train going through the Mullan Tunnel. In addition, he donated a wildflower Guide to Montana, a souvenir edition of the Bannack Free Press, and numerous articles about local persons.

Willie's nephew, Bob Bateman, author of *Big Blackfoot Railway* (Deer Lodge MT: Platen Press, 1980), donated the research documents he had used making that book in the late 1970s and many other historical documents. (*See related story on page 7.*)

Jimmie Willis, well known for his Tuesday cookies, gave the Center a color Xerox showing his mother Evelyn Hill and the

rest of George's Cafe staff when they operated the Cafe in the building where the Center now resides and a photo showing a view of the first Bonner School with the gardens and mill in the background. Jimmie also lent the Center the glass washboard his mother used and a wringer washing machine for display. Rick Swanson lent the large washtub to the exhibit.

Steve Bixby donated a number of maps relating to the Western Lumber Company both before and after it became part of Anaconda in 1924. Lola May LeProwse, wife of Bob LeProwse, donated several Champion promotional items including key rings and a pocket knife. She gave similar promotions that Anaconda had used including copper arrowheads and ballpoint pens. She also donated several photographs and a framed photograph of a load of very twisted walnut tree logs loaded on a truck bearing the local Champion logo given as a gag gift to Ernie Corrick who displayed it in his office. Corrick was a former VP of the Rocky Mountain Operation of Champion Timberlands Division of Champion International Corporation.

Bob Lamley donated a small travel razor. Danya Zimmerman donated several items that have been incorporated in the BMHC library. He also donated various receipts and memorabilia that related to the R&W wrecking yard in Milltown. Dick Shimer donated several forestry items including a Cleveland rule (a varnished log scale stick), 2 scaling tapes, a logger's tape, a manual for log scaling, and a metal log corer and case. He also gave USGS topo maps of Champion lands for different sections and pictures of the Bonner Dam and the Northern Pacific boxcar that rammed the plywood department. Norman Jacobson gave three photos of the Duck Bridge and added his collection of photos of the Milltown and Bonner Dams removal.

Peter Nielsen donated several items including a "Short History of the ACM Library Car," a photo-print of the Mullan winter camp at Cantonment Wright, a copy of the Cultural Resources report on the Bonner Dam removal, and a copy of the original *A Grass Roots Tribute* (which has since been reprinted.) Andy Lukes gave a copy of the Western Lumber Grading Rules in 1988 used by Rudi Miller who worked with Andy at Stimson. Jim Runyon gave a large Champion flag. Dave Otto gave two aerial photos of the log processing plant. And from the Buckhouse Collection (MaryAnn and Jerry) came pencils and pens from Anaconda as well as a collection of office stamps from the Western Lumber Company (1922-1928). (Note: we are continuing to process their collection...) And from Al of the Tuesday morning group, a brochure on measuring and marketing farm timber (1955) [apologies for no last name]. Rick Gendrow donated the first piece of plywood from the test run of the Plywood plant in 1973, an internet obtained sheet showing differences between the American Labor Union and Montana AFL-CIO, miscellaneous receipts dated 1908 from the American Federation of Labor, as well as a cashbook from

Continued on page 7

Bob Bateman donates his collection of research documents

By Minie Smith

Bob Bateman, author of *Big Blackfoot Railway* (Deer Lodge MT: Platen Press, 1980), donated the research documents he used writing that book in the late 1970s. This is a treasure trove of information about the railroad and the movie *Timberjack*, which was filmed in the area and premiered in Missoula in 1955. The movie featured the shay-style Willamette engine, now at Fort Missoula, which had been part of ACM's Big Blackfoot Railroad.

His collection includes three cassette tapes with interviews related to the railroad, several maps from 1922 relating to Anaconda, and a blueprint for a 75-ton Willamette Geared locomotive. He also donated copies of shares in the Big Blackfoot Railroad and a CD of *Timberjack*.

Bob's donation included several books on logging which are now in the BMHC's library. Numerous photos and negatives are being scanned and will be available to see on our website in the coming months.

It is hoped that in the near future BMHC can feature these objects in a special exhibit. Watch for details!



Jimmie Willis found a rare picture of the Bonner House.



It was a memorable day when a run-away boxcar slammed into the plywood plant. Dick Shimer photo.

Donations continued from page 6 that Union from 1904-1908.

Iva Rose MacKenzie donated a copy of "Robert McEwen and Descendants," and 10 scrapbooks and correspondence related to the Pacific Logging Congresses of which her father, Don MacKenzie, was an officer. She also donated photos, which are being scanned for eventual display on our website. These items came to the Center thanks the efforts of Dennis and Anna Sain. Dennis worked for Don MacKenzie at Woodworth.

Richard Black worked as a forester for both Anaconda and Champion, and at the encouragement of his son Jonathan, various items have made their way to the Center including a vest with the name of Howard Cooper on it (the company that made the large Wagner log loaders) and a scarf and computer bag with the Champion logo on them. There is also a brass plaque noting the relationship of Anaconda and the American Brass Company in Great Falls (*From Mine to Consumer*) and a wood sign that previously identified the "Anaconda Log Yard."

Jerold Caluori donated a 100 cup coffee pot, which was used by Champion and Stimson at company picnics that was found in the White House and a training manual of photos featuring types of log anomalies that mill workers would encounter. Hal Padden donated several old mason jars for the homemaker display. Thom Keith collected items from the Blackfoot River

including five horseshoes, a long fork and hook, a metal toy, and a wire tool. Jim and Don Labbe donated paperweights from the American Brass Company in Great Falls. One of the paperweights is a brass pipe on a piece of copper (Anaconda roofing copper.) "*From Mine to Consumer*" is engraved on the pipe.

Will Aiken was the superintendent of the Bonner School (1913-1945). His granddaughter Marcia Hall brought in a painting that Mr. Aiken painted for Ella Falligan on her birthday. Miss Falligan taught for 31 years at Bonner School. Mike Nelson donated a copy of his Bonner School scrapbook and an article about his river rescue of two boys. Jack Demmons added additional materials about the Bonner area from the Missoulian newspapers. Lee Legreid donated an old machinery ad for logging equipment and an ad for traveling by train and boat to Kalispell. Bruce Doehring let us scan his collection of vintage postcards.

Last, but hardly least, is a glass ashtray from the Phillips 66 gas station in Milltown, previously Wiemers and that became Stebbins 66.

Thank you to all who have donated. Let us know if we somehow overlooked your donation.

Photo collection speaks volumes

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum could publish an encyclopedia set rivaling the World Book (remember paging through those fascinating volumes?)

Previously unavailable photos will be online

Since 2009 we have received thousands of photos depicting scenes at the mill, in the woods, and of ordinary life. Recently, with our website update, we have developed a system for making these photos available to all via the internet. Like the encyclopedias, we are going digital so that our bountiful collection of historic photographs is accessible to anyone with a computer and internet connection.

As photos come to the Center, they are scanned. Some originals are donated and kept at the Center, but most are copied and returned to their owners. Under our newly established cataloging system, each photo will be available in two formats: for viewing and for research.

Two ways to use the collection

The “Photos, Viewing – BMHC” page is perfect for those who just enjoy looking at old photos. This is a gallery where you can easily peruse the pictures which are separated by category. If a particular photo catches your interest or if you’re visiting the website specifically to get some information about a particular photo or photos of a particular subject, you’ll go to the “Photos, Research – BMHC” page.

Based on the comprehensive Montana Memory Project, a collaboration of the Montana State Library and the Montana Historical Society “that provides access to digital collections relating to Montana’s cultural heritage and government,” our research collection will provide information, when known, including the title, date of the photograph, description, catalog number, and contributor.

Photo collection available on our website

You can start enjoying these photos early in 2018. The task of cataloging has begun and photos will be added in batches as the cataloging progresses. To get regular updates on our progress, check our website www.bonnermilltownhistory.org or “like” Bonner Milltown History Center on Facebook.

Naturally, you’re wondering – why attach the BMHC to the viewing and research pages? This is because our photos are a separate collection from the outstanding Jack L. Demmons Historic Photos collected 1976-1985. The Demmons Collection is currently available as part of the Montana Memory Project and the link is on our website.

Want Ad

Do you love Bonner history but live too far away to participate in the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum? If you’re computer savvy, there’s a fun way to contribute – join in our photo cataloging project! Our photo cataloging instructions are easy to understand and all of our photos are digital so you could receive a group of photos via internet, catalog them, and send the information back to us to be uploaded to the website. Easy peasy and fun – and a significant contribution to saving our history!

If this interests you, please contact us at bonnermilltownhistorycenter@gmail.com.



Caption reads: Singing the famous swan song. The last of the night runs. Sat., June 28, 1924. Jimmie Willis photo



Boy Scout trip to Helena. MacDonald Pass, 1961. Rich Hama photo

It’s time for our annual fundraiser. Please consider making a donation to the Bonner Milltown History Center and Musuem to help continue our work. We appreciate all gifts.

Website update illuminates Bonner's historic legacy

Magic carpets used to exist only in the pages of fiction books, but today, via the internet, they are real. One magic carpet ride you're invited to take is via the website *bonnermilltownhistory.org*. This website, begun in the early 2000s as a project of the Milltown Reservoir Superfund Redevelopment Working Group, was given to the Bonner Milltown History Center and recently received a major update. We are grateful to Irestone Web Design for help in designing and implementing the website.

The "meat" of the information is taken from *A Grass Roots Tribute, the Story of Bonner, Montana* and, admittedly, needs updating. History Center volunteers have been producing and

collecting information since 2009 and, finally, some of this work and earlier work done by others is available to the public for the first time.

Go to www.bonnermilltownhistory.org and check out, in particular, the Resources menu. It is rich with digital recordings, photos, publications, and videos of all things relating to our history. There is a lot more information to be posted so visit regularly!

To receive updates on the progress of the website and other notes of interest about Bonner, be our friend! "Like" us on our Bonner Milltown History Center Facebook page.



Maybelle Hill and Vivian Lizotte skating on the Reservoir near Milltown, December, 1951. Jimmie Willis photo.



The Champion sign comes down. Rick Swanson photo



Right: Time to eat. Olean family photo.



Above: Winter logging. Shirley Olson photo.



Left: Camp 5, Stark, ACM logging camp, Nov., 1921. Jimmie Willis photo



Right: Posing in the new Wagner log loader. 1960. Rich Hamma photo.

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 - 11:30am; Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 2 - 4:30pm*

Roundtables to start in February in 2018

Our 10th season of Roundtables has a diverse offering of topics, so mark the dates and plan to attend! Programs are at St. Ann Catholic Church, 9015 Hwy 200 in Bonner from 2– 4pm and are free and open to the public.

For those of you anxiously awaiting the start of the 2018 Series of Roundtables, you will have to wait until **Sunday, February 18, 2018!** On that date, Kim Briggeman will host first of the several Roundtables. Called the “**Bonner Bootleg**,” the program will revolve around well-known authors’ impressions of the Bonner area. Members of the BMHC committee will read excerpts from the poems and stories and Kim will present insights into the writings.

Although the final program is pending, authors included in Bonner Bootleg are older authors: Meriwether Lewis and Patrick Gass from the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Arthur Stone, whose weekly columns written while editor of the *Missoulian* (1907-1912) were later collected in the book *Following Old Trails*; John H. Toole, who, in the book *The Baron, the Logger, the Miner and Me*, wrote about his great-grandfather Cornelius “Baron” O’Keefe who came to Missoula with Capt. Mullan in 1859, his grandfather Kenneth Ross who became head of the timber division of the Anaconda Company, and his other grandfather John R. Toole, advisor to the Copper King Marcus Daly. The collection includes more recent authors such as Richard Hugo, Annick Smith, and the cowboy poet, Paul Zarzyski.

Specifics of this interesting program about Bonner’s past revealed through literature will be available by late January, so stay tuned!!!

If you want a sneak preview of the Bonner Bootleg, it’s available on our website www.bonnermilltownhistory.org. Look under Resources>Publications>Bonner Bootleg.

March Roundtable: Community Gardens

The second Roundtable on **Sunday, March 18** will focus on the “**Community Gardens**,” set up around WWI by the Anaconda Company so that mill workers could grow some of their own food. Glenn Max (Hooligan) Smith is hosting this event for the History Center.

Gladys Peterson in *A Grass Roots Tribute, The Story of Bonner, Montana*, provides background of the gardens that evolved when the mill very much depended on horses to move the lumber around.

“...Replacing the horse-exercising yard, the gardens began as a World War I effort in the spring of 1918 when the Anaconda Company plotted 150 spaces to be used by people of the community. The Company supplied the water and the gardeners their own hoses and seed for their plots, which were 100 by 150 feet each. It was jokingly said that everything was grown in these plots except wild oats! In his personal memoirs, former mill manager Kenneth Ross gave the following poignant description of the gardens:”

One of the grandest sites I ever saw in my life was when I happened to be at Bonner one evening as the sun was going down, and there were fully a hundred men, women and children, many of the women wearing white dresses, hoeing and caring for their gardens

Peterson continued, “ Added pleasure and usefulness were provided by the Community Gardens when they were flooded and enjoyed as a skating rink during the winter months,” (p.25)

Planning for the program is still underway, but currently the thought is to also look at the Mill property today and discuss projects there and within the community.

Plans underway for a third Roundtable

At this writing, plans for the 3rd Roundtable are pending, although the general topic would be “**Alcohol in Bonner**.” Keep up-to-date as these events unroll: Like our Facebook page: Bonner Milltown History Center.

Tuesday Morning Coffee

Join your friends every Tuesday morning 9:30-11:30 a.m. for coffee, homemade cookies, and conversation hosted by Jimmie 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.