

When Bonner Was Young

Week III: March 18, 2009

Bonner School



Couching 1886

Why Bonner?

The first school



A. L. Bonner



Andrew B. Hammond

□ Paul Zarzyski

Paul Zarzyski, born and raised in the logging/mining town of Hurley, Wisconsin, came to Montana in part because of the closing lines of Richard Hugo's poem "Driving Montana":

"You are lost/ in miles of land without people, without/ one fear of being found, in the dash/ of rabbits, soar of antelope, swirl/merge and clatter of streams."

Zarzyski worked for a time at the Bonner mill, studied under Hugo at the University of Montana and rode bareback broncs at Montana rodeos. In 2001, he is recognized as one of the most innovative cowboy poets in America. "Graveyard Shift at Bonner Mill" appeared first in The Chariton Review.

Graveyard Shift at Bonner Mill

Pitch glistens on the pine like sweat
and the white-faced logs roll
slow, cattle that sense the butcher,
the odor of fresh-cut bone.

A quarter moon sinks a keen edge
into a clearcut mountain,
and the only stars are sawdust
your crosscut sprays against the dark.

The one hope, the neon at Harold's
Milltown Bar, Hugo's poems preserved
there forever under glass
like the bighorn and the billy.

These hours fester in your head,
too much caffeine, tobacco juice,
the peaveys that stab your flesh
in bad dreams you have all day.

This work is meant for bitter nights
when the Blackfoot floats your shadow
far down stream
and a nighthawk is the only witness.



From Archives & Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula

Missoula Gazette, Oct. 4, 1890

POWER OF THE SAW

How the Buzz is Monkeyed With at Bonner.

The Log From Its Home in the Primeval Forest Until It is Sawed Into Boards

Closing excerpt: "At the Mill"

It is an interesting sight to see this mill working. The great whistle booms, the men jump to their places, the saws begin to revolve, with a low hum at first, which becomes a shriek and roar, drowning your efforts to talk.

The logs that have journeyed down the river have reached here after many a severe bump and bruise, and there they lay, their scaly backs exposed, rolling in the pond like a herd of leviathans. But not long here do they rest. They are nosed around to an endless spiked chain, treacherously running down into the black depths of the pond, which seizes them and drags them up an incline to the mill.

Once there two sturdy Irishmen hook them and heave them off, and suddenly a great steel-clad finger is thrust up in their midst and throws them on to the carriage, a lever is pressed, the shining saws gleam and flash, and the lever is touched and away they go, the circling disc of

steel shivering with its frightful velocity plunges into their resinous flanks shrieking like a fiend, the sawdust, the very heart's blood of the log, spurting up in a stream.

All the songs the tree has learned of the wind in the hills, all the melodies treasured up in the years of its growth since its bushy babyhood go up in one long wail of agonizing distress. Backward and forward it flies, moaning out its life, the fresh, fragrant boards falling from its sides till nothing is left.

Then the angry saw screams like a raging maniac till it is satisfied with another victim. Then these boards are hurried away on rollers down the long mill, edged, sized and trimmed and out into the yard, where they are piled in great pyramids, long avenues, squares and blocks are formed, through which you can wander, scenting the piny fragrance of the forest destined to become a city. W.

BONNER in the 1880s

1881 - Aug. 19: During construction of Northern Pacific Railroad across Montana, NP awards lumber contract to Eddy, Hammond and Co. (Company was E. L. Bonner) to build line from Garrison Junction to Thompson Falls. Mills immediately built at Clinton and Bonita.

1882 - Aug. 1: Montana Improvement Company (MIC) formed by Andrew Hammond, Richard Eddy, Edward L. Bonner, M.J. Connell, Marcus Daly and Washington Dunn. To exploit timber available from NP land grant, some 14 million acres in Montana alone.

Hiram Farr claims land and water rights at future site of Bonner mill.

1883 - Summer: Northern Pacific railroad is built through Bonner/Milltown. Crossed Clark Fork south of present Bandmann Bridge, recrossed in Pine Grove near present home of Bob and Phyllis Heyer. Crossed Blackfoot where Highway 200 crosses today.

Oct.: E.L. Bonner named president of MIC.

Dec.: MIC shipping 30 rail cars a day from 5 sawmills.

1884 - May: MIC buys land for future dam and mill from Hiram Farr for \$100.

September: MIC announces plan to build a dam one-half mile above mouth of the Big Blackfoot Dam was completed by November under direction of Robert Coombs.

Zaugg family travels by train from Missouri to settle in West Riverside.

1885 - Dam and most of sawmill plant at Bonner completed.

Oct.: Secretary of Interior files criminal and civil suits against MIC for cutting timber on private lands as well as railroad sections. Final settlement in 1918 for \$7,066.61.

Winter: Logging camp established in Blackfoot country, 25 miles upstream in Sunset Prairie. About 50 men employed.

1886 - Spring: First log drive down the Blackfoot, nearly 20 million board feet of logs. First bateau constructed by Henry Farrell and Fred Thibodeau, both from the Maine woods. 46 feet long. Farrell, with a crew of five, rowed and poled it upstream to the logging camp.

Thibodeau became operator of the trimmer in the first mill, stayed there for 50 years.

Bonner buys another half section of land from NP, including west of Blackfoot, for \$580.

June 6: First log sawed at Bonner (Hammond) mill. 10 a.m.

June 9: Richard Eddy says quite a town going up: 6 residences and a boardinghouse.

Early July: Mill completed. Henry Hammond first general manager. George Hammond had charge of logging. Clifford LaForge, Fred Thibodeau workers.

July: Henry Minier saloon license, Blackfoot. (At Blackfoot bridge, 3-87)

Oct. 19 or 20: Dance in Henry Hammond's large dining hall.

Nov. 2: First election of Bonner precinct held at the mill. 50 votes cast.

1887 - Blackfoot Milling Company incorporated, taking over assets of the MIC.

April 1: Bonner's first birth? Daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rouleau

April 15: Missoulain reports, "Brick will be in demand this year, and Mr. Hancock, who is running the Marshall Grade saw mill and brick yard, contemplates burning a million."

Andrew Hammond has built a brick kiln on leased land on Marshall Grade, to provide bricks to build the Florence Hotel, Eddy Building, and First National Bank in Missoula.

Planing mill added to lumber mill. Housed two machines. Samuel Chappell, supt.

Oct.: Sanford Deigle liquor license at Blackfoot (also 9-88)

1888 - Blackfoot Milling and Manufacturing Company succeeds the Blackfoot Milling Company. It later becomes Big Blackfoot Milling Co. (1891), Big Blackfoot Lumber Co. (1909), Anaconda Copper Mining Co. (1910), The Anaconda Company, Lumber Department (1955), Anaconda Forest Products (1961), Champion International (1972) and Stimson Lumber (1994).

March: First Bonner post office established. Lane E. Paskell postmaster.

June: Henry Hammond becomes postmaster, serves until July, 1899. Road built up the Blackfoot from Bonner and the town of Bonner begins to take form.

July: John Copp in charge of hotel? At Blackfoot Mills, feeding 130 a day.

Aug. 1: River packed with logs for 2 miles

Sash and door factory added to the plant.

(Circa:) Dam at Bonner mill begins producing electrical power.

Oct.: Electric lights working well at Blackfoot mill. Plan 2 story school with hall on second floor. Longstaff & Brooks draw up plans for school.

Oct. 30 or 31: L.W. Anderson killed when caught in endless chain carrying logs at mill.

Nov. 21: Sawmill closes for winter. Many workers go logging. Planing, door & sash continue.

1889 - Jan. 16: Henry Hammond gives dance to celebrate completion of Masonic Lodge, or Bonner Hall. Served as first school until 1907. Torn down in early 1940s.

March 14: Bonner School District (No. 41) established by Missoula County Commissioners.

Original Blackfoot road completed by Pat Hayes, who was paid \$1,400; follows much same route as Highway 200 today to McNamara Landing.

July: W.H. Hammond merchandise license, Bonner. (Company store opened?)

Autumn: First classes at Bonner School? C.W. Young principal (?), W.H. Hammond trustee, S. Mitchell clerk.

Nov. 9: Montana becomes a state.



Bonner family: Carrie, Bessie, Lenita (Spottswood), Edward L.

From: historicmissoula.org:

Realizing that continued prosperity for Missoula would be enhanced by the arrival of the railroad, A. B. Hammond, C. P. Higgins, E. L. Bonner, Francis L. Worden, A. J. Urlin, and Washington J. McCormick were instrumental in bringing the railroad to Missoula.

Bonner used his political influence to lay the commercial groundwork; Hammond set out ties and bridge timbers in areas he thought the rail line would run; Higgins and Worden offered the rail line choice lots throughout Missoula as did Urlin and McCormick with the intent that the railroad set up a station, repair shop, and divisional headquarters. With the gift of hundreds of lots to the railroad, Higgins and Worden hoped the lumber contract for ties, bridges, and buildings would be awarded to Worden and Company. The effort of all men helped attract the Northern Pacific Railroad, but the lumber contract went to Eddy, Hammond and Company.

Missoula Gazette, June 11, 1892

Blackfoot Bridges.

The county commissioners went up the Blackfoot yesterday to inspect the ground there in the vicinity of Blue Slide with a view of putting in some bridges. The slide gives constant trouble by reason of the sliding of the hill and it is proposed to avoid this by building a bridge across the river and back, though this has not been fully determined upon. The one bridge that is there now is minus a span owing to the high water, and this will, of course, be repaired, or more probably a new bridge put int at once. The trip to the Blackfoot consumed the day and the commissioners did no other business.

Missoula Gazette, June 30, 1892

The programme for the celebration of the Fourth at Bonner is an interesting one. There will be a picnic and bowery dance, a base ball game between two picked nines, foot races, sack races ,jumping and other athletic sports. Refreshments will be served on the grounds. Everybody is invited to attend and a good time is promised.

THE BONNER MANSION

A landmark in Missoula which sat on an entire landscaped city block, the mansion was built for Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Bonner in 1891. Mr. Bonner, a native of New York state, worked his way west to San Francisco, to Oregon, Walla Walla, and started the Bonner's Ferry on the Kootenai River in Idaho. A hard-working, capable businessman who made a lot of money in various enterprises. He had a great ability to organize projects and men into successful operations. He opened the Bonner and Welch store in Missoula, which later became the Missoula Mercantile, and played an active part in the construction of the Northern Pacific Railway branch lines to Hamilton and Philipsburg, providing contracts for timber, ties, etc. The Montana Union was completed later providing a connection between Butte and Missoula and creating a greater demand for lumber, etc. He achieved wealth and a leading position among businessmen of the nation and yet remained loyal to Montana. His wife, the woman behind the creation of the great house, was 15 when she married Bonner. She gave a great deal of thought to the construction of the home, having spent much time driving about the streets of St. Paul, Minnesota, during a visit there with an architect, picking out various features she wanted to incorporate into their home. In later years the Bonner's, and Dr. and Mrs. Spotswood, daughter of the Bonner's, filled the house with art treasures collected on their travels over the world. The treasures which could be moved were given to the University of Montana or transported to the home of Mrs. Spotswood in Portland, Oregon. COMPILED FOR JACK WEIDENFELLER BY MARIE GILES

The Bonner Mansion in 1903 was one of the most elegant homes in the area. TGC



RAILROAD NEWS.

A flag station to be known as "Honner" has been established at the Big Blackfoot spur.

C. H. Boynton, of Leadville, has taken Ridgeway's place in the train despatcher's office.

Two cars of cattle were shipped from this station to Garrison, en route to Butte Wednesday.

A railroad disaster on the Utah & Northern last week, caused by a broken rail, killed one man and wounded several others.

C. W. Schaberg, fuel agent, is making a trip over the western end of the road looking into supplies and getting ready for winter.

Superintendent Gilbert will pay off tomorrow, which is several days earlier than usual, so as to give the employes a chance to use their money for Christmas.

G. W. Cushing, superintendent of motive power and machinery, W. T. Small, his assistant for the western divisions, and J. C. Barber, master car-builder at Brainerd, were in town this week looking through the shops and examining the condition of the rolling stock here.

Master Mechanic Garloch this week received a section of a cedar pile driven in the water at Tacoma twenty months ago. The section is literally honeycombed by the teredo, a water worm, and one in looking at it no longer wonders that some ships are never heard of after leaving port.

A granite quarry has been opened by the railroad company a couple of miles north of Wallace. Samples of the rock have been sent east to be tested and if it proves satisfactory, as is probable, a considerable force will be set at work taking out rock to be used in bridge piers and for other purposes.

The new Congressional express train on the Pennsylvania railroad, which was started last week is one of the fastest trains in the country. It makes the run between Philadelphia and Washington, 138 miles, in three hours and fifteen minutes, including stops, making the actual running rate 46 miles per hour. The fastest train between New York and Boston covers the distance 224 miles in 4 hours and 15 minutes.

CHRISTMAS

OF -- ALL -- DES

JACOB LEI

The Finest lot of Christmas brought to Western M. CALL AND SELECT YOUR ONCE.

RELIGIOUS NEWS.

Rev. D. McGregor will preach at Carlton next Sunday at 11 a. m.

Rev. Father Dolis, of Butte, has been visiting this place and Frenchtown for the past week.

There will be services at the Episcopal church in this place on Christmas morning at eleven o'clock.

Rev. M. Powers will preach at Etna on Saturday, Dec. 27, at 7 p. m., and on Sunday, Dec. 28, at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Services at the Methodist church in this city next Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m., conducted by Rev. H. D. Wadsworth.

Services at the Episcopal church in this place next Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m., conducted by the pastor, Rev. George Stewart.

At the Catholic church in this city next Sunday there will be early mass at 8 a. m., late mass at 10:30 p. m., Sunday school at 2:30 p. m., and Benediction at 8 p. m.

Rev. Edwin M. Ellis will preach on the subject of temperance next Saturday night at Corvallis at 7 p. m. and will also preach at Etna on Sunday night at 8:30 p. m.

Services at the Presbyterian church in this city next Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m. conducted by the pastor, Rev. George M. Fisher. Subject of morning discourse...

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The Song of Bonner

Well, you've got your:

Thibodeau, Cadieux, Cyr and Levesque. ... This is the song of Bonner.

Heikkila, Bergseth, Karkanen, Hama. ... Here is the song of Bonner.

The Suomi Club and George's Café.

Riverside Park, where the band used to play.

Painting the B, the old Engine Shay.

Join in the chorus to Bonner.

The Margaret Hotel, the Club Chateau -- oh,

the Black Bridge and second Red Bridge,

Blue Slide and Heaven, Marco Flats picnics.

These are the lyrics of Bonner.

Akin and Beadle and Castonguay, Disbrow and Erkkila.

Fleming and Gendrow, Hill, Inman, Jones,

Kattelus, Labbe and Moe. Niemi, Otto, Petaja, and Ranstrom,

Secrist, Toivonen, Unger and Violette. Wisherd, and ol' Arnold Zaugg:

the ABCs of Bonner.

A one-armed ballplayer named Kelly Pine; Ritchie Fontaine Fights Tonight.

Log-rolling contests, workup and cutthroat,

These are the games of Bonner.

Akerson, Anderson, Big Nels Abrahamson, Carlson, Dodson, Erickson, Gunderson,

Hanson, Iverson, Jacobson, Johnson, Larson, Magnusson, Madsen and Matson,

Mikkelsen, Nelson, Olson and Otterson. Pearson, Peterson, Robinson.

Salmonson, Sampson, Swanson and Thompson.

Daughters and sons of Bonner.

Wood smoke wafts on a summer night's breeze.

The trail back home is coated with leaves.

Roars of an ice break on rivers upstream.

Tadpoles stir gladly in the frog pond ... these

are the seasons and songs of Bonner.