**26 Bonner History Roundtable: ACM Logging Camps**

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<https://youtu.be/MMYrkvmo4uk?si=6_QkDdTKsjq6y25q>

*Dennis Sain, Bonner Milltown History Center*

This program has been edited for clarity.

(Intro music and credits)

[00:00:58] **Judy Matson:** Okay, we're going to get started. Welcome everybody. This is the last of our series for this year, and it's a real treat to hear Dennis talk about these logging camps. This presentation is being recorded by the Missoula County Access Television as part of a media assistance grant that is donated by MCAT. If you want more information about any of their programs you can go to MCAT; m-c-a-t.o-r-g. If you missed anything in our previous programs you can get them on demand by going to mcat.org and selecting Channel 189, and then in the search box type a few words of what you're looking for and you'll be able to watch our programs at any time at home.

I'd like to also thank Friends of Two Rivers for sponsoring the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum for this grant. MCAT has done such a wonderful job of preserving our timber heritage history. We're going on our ninth year and they've recorded every single program, so that's a wonderful service.

I’d also like to thank St. Ann Catholic Church for letting us have our meetings here, and Joe Brown and Walter Peckham are our sound technicians. Reminder, we have coffee and cookies. Please help yourselves. They're over there by the kitchen, and then to my right the restrooms are located back in the southeast corner of the room if you need them.

So, many of you are familiar with Dennis Sain's popular programs. He's given them several times in different places and towns. He gives programs on railroads and on logging camps. In addition, he has written up guides on both of these subjects and has created four dioramas featuring logging, which are on display at the Bonner Milltown History Center and Museum.

 We hope you'll all stop in to see those too. We're open Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 for coffee and cookies and conversation, and then Wednesday and Thursday afternoons we are open from 2:00 to 4:30 in the afternoon. So please come and visit us. And Dennis, take it away.

[00:03:20] **Dennis Sain:** Well, I hope everybody got their boots on because this could get a little deep here. I'm a logger, (laughter) so, well, let's get started here. The early days here of the logging A.B. Hammond and Company (start of slideshow), they had a logging contract for the Northern Pacific Railway and they hauled all the timbers and railroad ties, and everything is a Northern Pacific built through Missoula to Gold Creek. In fact, they were hauling from, I think, hauling timbers to Walla Walla, Washington, even that far. They built several small sawmills along the way as they built the railroad grade. These sawmills kind of moved as they went along, and logging was short distances.

There were small camps and one of the camps that I had been to, I've forgotten, left that at home (laughter), we were building road in Cramer Creek and our road runner, or our assistant logging superintendent, Len Boe, was our road runner. He told Baldy and I; well, Baldy would be Bob Grenfell (laughter), that probably in about a week we'd be building through an area that had some little cabins and he wanted us (to) just doze them into a heap so they could burn them up later. Well, I knew what those cabins were. I'd hunted in there. So we loaded up the Jeep one weekend and drove up the road and I knew where to turn out.

We drove off and down the ridge till we found the cabins and looked through the cabins. While my wife was busy salvaging these door - these porcelain doorknobs off the front door - I was walking between the two cabins and there was a wooden sidewalk. On that sidewalk was this whiskey barrel lid (Barrel lid photo).

Whoop, we'll go backwards. (reverses slide direction)

It was laying upside down on the wooden sidewalk. That camp had been there when they were building a railroad in the 1880s. They finished the construction in 1883. So sometime in the 1880s that had been there and it was laying upside down and I turned it over. I've… all I have done to that thing was put some more dowels in where the dowels were rotted away just to hold it together. So that's the finish it's had on it since the 1880s.

(Unnamed historic photo) Well, in 1886 [1883], the railroad was completed and now they still need moving timber. The portable sawmills were not doing the trick. So they built the large mill at Bonner. Big Blackfoot Railroad [Big Blackfoot Milling Company] which became Anaconda Company. They bought them out. It stayed Big Blackfoot clear until about 1908, I think, and then they changed it to Anaconda Company on the railroad. They built the mill at Bonner and started logging up the Blackfoot: Johnson Creek, Marco Flats, the old Tommy Clark place, and on up the, along the, everything come down the river. They had built … the logging camps looked like this. They were what they called rag camps (Camp #5 photo). They had a wood, possibly a wooden floor, and had all these tents, that was your cook tent, and your sleeping tents. As they built up the river and even they had camps at Seeley Lake where they … and Placid Lake, where they cut timber there and floated 'em all the way down the Clearwater to the Blackfoot and on to Bonner.

Then the floating logs down the river was getting a little bit iffy at times. High water one day and low water the next. The company purchased two Shay locomotives. These were class B Shays, two truckers. That's either No. 1 or No. 2, I can't see a number on it. (Locomotive photo) They brought them to Bonner, dismantled them, and put 'them on skids and sleds and drug them up to McNamara, and put them back together.

[00:08:02] They logged all the McNamara, in that area. When they did that, now we're no longer sleeping in the tents. We built bunk cars (Bunk car photo). They're on railroad tracks, they're on, whoops, go back here. On railroad tracks. Got a siding there and all these cars are sitting there, they pulled them in. That one there is probably a kitchen car right there with all the windows. The rest of these are bunk cars and some of them are wash houses. The loggers they were, they're kind of rough-tumble group. They… living in the camps was not a real picnic.

 I'm gonna refer mostly to this map (Untitled map slide), and I have the copy there in front. (First railroad camps map) Yeah, we'll go, this [is] where I'm gonna start. This here is their first railroad camps. Here they had two headquarters, which [in] a lot of logging operations you had one headquarters and then several satellite camps. But here we had two headquarters, the main headquarters out here on the Hacker Ranch, Julie Case Hacker. Her family bought the ranch from the company.

The other one is McNamara Landing. Just past, you go to, people think Johnsrud was McNamara's Landing, but McNamara's Landing was just around the corner from Johnsrud Park. That was your railroad headquarters now that we had railroad locomotives. From 1904 until 1911, it was a captive railroad. They hauled everything in, built the railroad by pieces, and they couldn't go anyplace but where it was at. And then 1911 Milwaukee built up and crossed the Blackfoot River and then come on up to headquarters here. They hauled logs out with the Milwaukee engine, because a rod engine could travel much faster than a Shay locomotive, which maybe, maybe 20 mile an hour would be the top speed for a Shay. So they hauled the logs to the mill from there. To start with the logs, they hauled them down, dumped them in the river. So the river drive’s about 10 miles from McNamara to Bonner. There was a huge log dump there. They had it all logged all of…

This [is] just a few of the railroad grades. I have another map that shows more of the railroad grades. On this railroad grade we were building road back up in this country here and there was a logging camp. I mean the main headquarters camp is here, but there was a logging camp up here on the railroad, and we looked through, scrounged around. I found a knuckle off of a railroad train, a knuckle coupler. Scrounging through that, looking around on the table over there, the three bottles I found in that camp, one whiskey bottle and two beer bottles that had been laying in that camp all these years. Ed Olean was my partner. He found some other objects and he's got them in his safe wherever it's at.

Photo of unnamed male) At Potomac, we got one special man that came to work for the company. (Cassius W. McEwen) He worked for ‘em down at Trout Creek at Superior, and they moved him up in 1912 to come up to Potomac. He was their purchasing agent. When he first started, the timekeeper, Bill Kelly. told him, he says, "With the things you're doing, you're not gonna last with this company very long."

Well, he had another man, Don MacKenzie, (Presumed photo of Don MacKenzie) who was a laborer, and he talked him [MacKenzie] into, "Well, why don't you become a scaler?" Well, he was a scaler for a short time, and then they made him a logging superintendent. McEwen and MacKenzie, who weren't going to last long, worked to run the company operation for over 40 years together until they both retired together.

(Photo of Potomac camp) This is a view of the headquarters camp at Potomac. Whoop, go back here. This building is burned down. It had, they put a tin roof on it and I was working, coming up the valley to go to work one day at about 5:30 in the morning, I see a glow and I get up there. Lightning had hit that building and burned it to the ground.

This building is still standing. The roof doesn't look that good anymore, but inside you go... Inside the horse stalls are all painted white, still nice and white inside, and most of these buildings are gone. This was the main company camp at Potomac. (Second photo of Potomac camp) There's another view of the camp. You can see the little short 20-foot log cars for hauling the short logs with the little two-truck Shays. When they had to go to 40-foot cars it was more than them little Shays could really handle.

The three-truck Shays did all the main hauling. The two-truck Shays now were put on work trains. They had an ongoing deal where one Shay had the track-laying tool and they would go out and they would be building new spurs. The other one, they'd be pulling up the tracks and stuff of old logging spurs and then moving it. So continual process of pulling old tracks up, putting new tracks down. Then the main tracks, were the main Shays were pulling the stuff down until they wrecked two Shays one winter. The two big Shays got wrecked and then the little Shays had to take over while the ones were being repaired.

(McNamara camp photo) This is the logging camp at McNamara. We built a logging road, goes right through there. The main McNamara Road comes out of Johnsrud, goes right through there and that building there. Well, about the next picture, we'll see.

(McNamara camp and loggers photo) That's the building I pointed out. On a Sunday, you know, everybody's in their Sunday best. Now, all these loggers, they were poor, didn't have much, but on Sunday they all had a go-to-meetin' suit to wear. So Sunday they're out, and this guy here, you look right there on his coat. It looks like he has something on his coat. Took that picture and they walked off probably down to in here someplace. My granddaughter lives in Seattle. They, her grandparents out there bought her a real fancy metal detector and she wanted to come over here and wanted to use it. So I brought 'em up here to this place to use it. And the second hole they dug, she found that gold pin. (Photo of BMRR pin)

[00:15:39]It says BMRR on it. The B and the M are black and white. Like Boston and Maine Railroad. I wrote to the Boston, Maine Historical Society. They know nothing about it because it's railroad. It says B M R R with a lantern. This is what they called a link-and pin-coupler before we had the Janney knuckle couplers.

(Scale photo of BMRR pin) There’s actual size of the pin compared to a penny. It's gold, had enamel in it. Mr. Taylor back here, his book on “Montana Central,” he pointed out that the BM was probably the Boston and Montana Railroad, a wholly owned Anaconda railroad in Great Falls that hauled the coal into the smelter in Great Falls. So hopefully we will track that down, see if it's someplace from that.

(Photo of a Shay car) And then this. This is another Sunday afternoon. Guys are real busy. And now we got the 40-foot log cars. That's a little two-truck Shay. See, they were wood burners. The first two Shays were wood burners. The next five were coal burners, and the very last one was an oil burner. They had eight Shays total for Anaconda.

(Photo of #7 locomotive) Then we're going to the larger log cars. So now we had to go to the larger locomotive. The first trains were 32-ton Shays. These were 70-ton Shays. And this is a famous No. 7 that was in the movie “Timberjack.” This was taken at Woodworth sometime in the ‘40s. And of all eight Shays, there's only two left. No. 7, which was bought used from Western Lumber, and No. 100 who was bought used from some other mill.

 (Grade Map) In 1926, they moved … In ‘16, they'd moved to Nine Mile and logged up there. So in 1926 they come back up here to the Greenough area. Well, they had to build a bridge across the river right there, and they moved up from Nine Mile in May and started the bridge. By late September they had the bridge built across the river. But in the meantime, you don't realize all them camp cars that we saw earlier, the company had 31 bunk cars on railroad trucks, plus 25 other railroad cars on trucks for their logging, for supplies, for offices, and all the other…. the blacksmith workers. So out here at Nine Mile Prairie, you've got 51 railroad cars parked while they're trying to build this bridge.

We have come across some pictures lately that I have over there from the 1926-27 era, they built camps 3, 4 and 5. Three was in there. Four and five were on that, on that side of the river where they went across the river and then decked the logs on the ice in the river all the way across the river. Then when spring come, they just rolled them in the river.

(Depot photo) This is the depot at Sunset. Now there is a depot at Sunset. But it is basically a little tiny shack and it sits about a quarter of a mile down the track from where this was located. And if a guy drives, like you're going down Nine Mile Prairie, and you come across, you'll see several railroad grades sitting where the railroad grade used to be on both sides of it. That's where they parked all the camp cars while they were building the bridge.

Then they moved into Greenough in ’26, and then in 1929 things went to hell. October 29, the stock market crash, they had approximately 600 loggers and no more wood to cut. The volume of wood to haul into the mill was cut down. They just had a skeleton crew and so, you had around 600 loggers. It's not all loggers because you consider the 600 loggers [and] you've got probably 150, 200 horses. So you gotta have stable crew. You got guys that are shoeing horses, doctoring horses, and you have your blacksmith shop. You have your tool supply, everything. So it's not just 600 guys out there wrestling wood, you got 600 guys, total. Cooks and camp flunkies.

[00:20:56]So now we didn't have much to do. So that run (unclear) at Elk Creek, which is right in there. (slide doesn’t match map until “Ovando a long ways” below) Actually Elk Creek is down there. They didn't have near as many camps at… the little tin truck I found that's sitting on the table, I found at one of the camps up the top of Greenough Hill. We went off and it was laying in the dump up there. So in our History Center [in] Bonner, you see a lot of rusty items that I helped clean out my garage and stuff that, all my years of working, scrounging through these logging camps and picking up little artifacts here and there. So now they make a great history display.

Now in 1934, we move back up the river again. Milwaukee built some more trackage up to here. Well, Milwaukee ended a rail right there. They had to railroad grade, run through Ovando a long ways, but get back. (Grade map)

That built track there, and then the company built seven miles up here to Woodworth and established a new Woodworth camp. Out of Woodworth, there was total of 12 logging camps. Seven of them were railroad camps. The rest now, 1934, we're starting to haul logs by truck and on this map over back in there was Camp Four, just at Blanchard, was the very first logging truck camp.

I couldn't find… we have a picture someplace of an old Model A Ford truck hauling logs from Camp 4, probably about two miles down to the Blanchard landing on the railroad. So we're getting more trucks. The horses are disappearing. In 1926, they started getting a few Cats. MacKenzie said some of the operators weren't certain they wanted to run one of them newfangled Cats, but he said after they sat on that seat for a little bit, they would much rather sit on the seat than be behind the tail of a horse all day.

So the horses were disappearing. By 1934, they were practically all gone. There was still a few horses. Don Skillicorn has some, we have a video of some. He took some home movies of up here in Woodworth, I think back over in here someplace (points to map) that shows the railroad car sitting there and shows a guy come in with a horse pulling couple of logs and he unhooks the logs, heads off the landing. Then next thing you know, them little tiny Cats comes in dragging a few logs after the horse left. So we got the two means going together, and by around 1940 the horses were all gone and they got all these Cats. Now we don't need quite so many, we don't need all the horse tenders, the horseshoers, people taking care of the horses. But we have Cat skinners now and now so some of these horse people now are turned into choker setters. So we have a guy driving a Cat and a guy running around the brush setting chokers for the Cats. But the Cats were nowhere near what the Cats are today.

[00:24:54] (Library car photo) Then at Woodworth, this car is still alive. This is out at the Fort Museum. This is the library car. And the library car was an amenity that they had in the logging camps. You know, the rough life and everything in the logging camps. The library car, (interior of library car photo) it held around 2000 books, and that car was pulled up to like at Woodworth, it would sit at Woodworth for a while. Maybe they would take it out to Camp 7, Rainbow Lake, up there for maybe a week. So that crew or, go over to Shanley Creek, that camp. Or over to Camp 8, or one of the other railroad camps. The car was moved from camp to camp.

A lot of these loggers, you know, at the end of the Depression, a lot of loggers graduate the eighth grade and they’re young kids, need to go get work. The woods is a good place to go get work or die. Both, sometimes. So you had a lot of eighth-grade education loggers, high-school graduates, very few college students at that time in the woods. But one thing they did do, they read. That library was well used. And now that car is on display out at Fort Missoula museum. It was at Twin Creeks when they moved from Camp 9 down to Twin Creeks. It was cleaned out. It was used as a cable house, stored rolls of cable and chokers and other tools like that in it. Then when they were gonna close down, the car was shipped to the Fort out there.

And there was another railroad car. One of the workers at Twin Creeks bought it and had it in his yard. Well, the company had taken the clerestory off of that car when we had a cable house out of it. Well, they needed the clerestory, so he sold 'em a clerestory off of his railroad car. So he had just a plain roof on his now, and the Fort now has a clerestory on theirs.

(Company store photo) Then at Woodworth we had a good commissary. Guys could come in the company store, I guess you'd call it, “owe your lot to the company store,” buy what you wanted, your goodies. Everything in the company store. And had a big cook house. (Cook house photo)

(points to a map on easel). Now this is the map of the Woodworth camp and the cook house and everything down there. Then railroad cars, the bunk cars, all that's left of them was down there and we had houses. A lot of people living in houses now. We had crews. (Dining hall photo) And this was the dining hall. Now, when they moved from Camp Nine to Twin Creeks, the dining hall came to Twin Creeks. It was mounted on a little mound of dirt down there and all these windows were gone. There were them laminated beams there. There were garage doors. This was a parking garage for the pickups at Twin Creeks Camp for years.

(Woodworth main office photo) This was the main office at Woodworth after all the little tiny …, this was a large building and I think it's, it might be covered up now, but it's in there someplace. It [had] offices, and supply house. So at Woodworth we have pretty substantial buildings now, and this is the coal dock. (Coal dock photo) The plans for the coal dock I have on the table over there. For coaling up the locomotives. The wood burners [locomotives] are elsewhere. No. 1, that went to Plains for a lot of years, but everything up at Woodworth was coal-burning locomotives. That coal dock had five bays, and you could put five carloads of coal in it. At that time, those were 40-ton cars, not the hundred-ton cars that we have nowadays.

So you put five 40-ton cars, load[s] of coal in there. And Dick McEwen, he was, his dad was the purchasing agent. He is a kid growing up in camp. He had his own little business there. But he says one day they were trying to put a coal car up on top of that ramp, and the locomotive pushed it up there and he [engineer] got almost [to] the top and spun out. Couldn't get up there. So he backed up the track, made a run at it. Well, then when he got the top, he couldn't stop. (laughter) Coal car went off the end of the ramp. Made quite a bit of excitement in camp. When the crew come in there -- "What happened?"

[00:30:00]Dick McEwen is a kid there. His dad was purchasing agent. He had a little side business. The company had the little speeders now, and so the crews didn't have to ride out on the logging cars back to the job so much, and they come in at night. He would go to the ice house and fill [a] tub, them big round wash tubs full of ice and pop, and he would sell pop to the loggers as they come in off the logging train before they went to dinner.

(First aid station photo) Then (Cassius W.) McEwen, he was a big safety (man)... He had the first first-aid station built. … When he started, like I said, he wasn't gonna last long. He insisted that the company, the loggers, had their own bed rolls and, all right, they were full of lice, and fleas and other things. And these epidemics in the camps of everybody itching and scratching. He had them get rid of all of that and had the company purchase bedding for the guys.

Kelly thought, “You ain't gonna last long.” But the company went along for it and the guys got along better. He also was big on first aid because in the old days if a logger got hurt up there to get him to Missoula on the old road -- you consider the Roundup Bar Bridge wasn't built until around 1950 - so you had to come from Woodworth down around Salmon Lake, across the Old Red Bridge at Clearwater Junction, over Sunset Hill, up Greenough Hill. So a trip to Missoula from there was about a two-hour drive on the old highway, and C.W. McEwen said that some of them drives were real bad. He had an injured logger in the back and he talked to him all the way. And a few times by the time they get to Missoula, there was no more conversation. The guy had died on the way to Missoula. So he was big on the first aid.

(Photo of McKenzie's house) And then that was MacKenzie's house in Woodworth. For a so-called temporary camp, that's a pretty good-sized house. (School room photo) Now we got the families and all the houses over here. We have kids who have the school, have the Park School. Everybody calls it the Woodworth School, but the original name was Park at Woodworth. The school is still standing, and Stan Cohen told me that the museum owns the school, but they can't move it to Missoula and nobody's taking care of it. Just sitting there kind of rotting away. It's a nice little old school building still sitting out there at Woodworth.

(Students at Park School photo) This some of the kids from 1935. There's Dick McEwen, and there's Iva Rose MacKenzie, the children of the two main bosses. And this is another, he worked at Twin Creeks Road. Bud Wolf. Ernie Wolf, … 1935 at the Park School, part of the logging camp kids.

(Photos of the McEwen's) And this is Iva Rose and this is Dick McEwen.

(Photos of McEwen's and MacKenzie) And now this is Dick McEwen and his wife Patty. We went down to California and interviewed him. We have a video recording of him, and this is Iva Rose MacKenzie. She lives down here in this Riverside Healthcare. She's 89 years old now. She'll be 90 in August. Still gets around, a little rough getting around, but she gets around and we have recorded some history from her.

Get back here. (Camp Nine photo) Then in 1949, they moved camp again. Camp Nine had already been built.

(Logging truck photo, but Dennis pointing to unseen map) Camp Nine was right in there, right below Salmon Lake. I think that was Salmon Lake. It was already an established camp, and then they were done with the railroad. The logging locomotives are done. Some of them had already been scrapped. Some of them were parked, stored. No. 7 and No. 5 are the only two locomotives left. No. 7 is out the Fort. No. 5 is now in Arizona. They're… what area? Grand Canyon Railroad or something is trying to refurbish it so it can run again. But they moved a bunch of the buildings out of Woodworth and beefed up Camp Nine, made it to Headquarters Camp at that time.

[00:35:24] And now we're hauling logs on the trucks. According to the number on that picture, that's 11,420-board feet of logs on that truck. It's a good thing he had company roads because he had no power lines to go under. He’d have strung power lines for miles with that. And you notice had they loaded that, they loaded up so high and then they put a wrapper around, hold that together. Then they got these logs up on top. You better hope the tong setter, the tongs came out of that log when he dropped it on the truck, because the tong setter, the truck driver sure as heck didn't want to climb out on that load and kick them tongs loose. But they (were) going all the trucks now.

They had three railroad landings at that time. Rossignol Logging had moved to Ovando and he [Rossignol] had a camp set up in Ovando, and he was logging all of the Ovando country, which would be back over in here (point to unseen map). And hauling them to the end of the Milwaukee tracks, which they called Rossignol's Landing at that time, by Scotty Brown Bridge. And just before you get to the Scotty Brown Bridge, there's a flat there. The railroad landing, before they built the highway, the railroad landing was out on that big flat. Then they built the highway through there, so the railroad landing was up alongside the hillside, a smaller landing. Then they had the Bear Creek Landing where the company built roads up Bear Creek and built a bridge across the river below Scotty Brown, I mean, Sperry Grade.

They hauled what they called the Bear Creek Landing, and they had the Blanchard Landing. So everything out of Placid Lake came down, had the company road all the way down, but then they - some of them come out Placid Lake and come down the highway, and if you notice by Clearwater Junction that before you get to there coming down, you see a curved road. They built a road across the prairie to the Bear Creek Landing. So trucks could go either to Bear Creek or Blanchard Creek when they were logging in there.

(Photos of Twin Creeks camp) Then in ‘59 they moved to Twin Creeks and Skilly [Don Skillicorn], said he was in charge when they moved the buildings from Camp Nine, which is most of these buildings, came out of Camp Nine, they moved, loaded them on trucks, hauled them down the highway, and Harold Schmidt was in charge of the truck hauling, and Larry Smith, the other crew foreman, was arranging them in Twin Creeks. So they build up the Twin Creeks.

And at Twin Creeks, this is now out at the Fort. That's the slide loader. The woods terminology was a slide-ass. It's out at the Fort. The library car's out the Fort and the little doodlebug thing that hauled the loggers is out at the Fort. When they shut Twin Creeks down in ’86, this building, they had us tow that up the road, push it over the bank and burn it. One of the last railroad bunk cars.

[00:39:00] And at Twin Creeks, it was no longer a live-in camp. The one house, Larry Smith, the crew foreman, lived in the house until he retired. Then Donald and Lucille James, Donald James is a loader operator in the woods, and Lucille took over as secretary in the office. They moved from their house up in Boulderville, down and lived in the camp house. The company had built Boulderville, a little campsite just out of walking distance out of Twin Creek, up West Twin, and most of them guys, there were trailer houses, a couple houses that were built, but mainly trailer houses was the camp for the loggers. They lived up there, walked down to the camp. Truck drives, catskinners, whatever.

(Modern day bus slide) Then after they left, shut Twin Creeks down, since then I have taken some logging camp tours. A school bus… our very first trip, that was our school bus (laughs). Like a Beachliner. And this is at the Potomac camp on the Case Ranch. Highway 200 is right over there, so we’re just off the highway. You can see everything from the highway. And she allows people to go in and hunt on the place. You gotta check in, but before we did I went and obtained permission to make sure we could drive in with a crew, and so we took a logging camp tour. Went through all the buildings there. After that we went down to McNamara’s. And this dirt pile here, and there’s another one over here. This is where they repaired the two Shays that they wrecked in Potomac that one river. Lima Locomotive come out and rebuilt the Shays so they had this special shed built. This whole thing, the camp was in here in 1916 and then it burned in about 1930, so there were no trees growing, and in the early 60s they went out and tried to seed plant that, and it didn’t take. So the next year they sent me out with a brush cat to scratch, tear all the soil out, and then we went in there and hand-planted trees two years in a row.

And even Ernie Corrick, the big head honcho, logging head, he come out, planted several days with us. Some of the guys: “Who in the hell is this guy? Come and plants for awhile and gets in a car and leaves.” They thought who is this? (laughs) But this is where they repaired the locomotives.

(new slide of group of people) This is down on where the railroad… the river is right down behind these people right here. This is on the railroad grade near a log dump, where they would pull the railroad cars in and roll the logs into the river right here.

(pointing to unseen map) And now all of these railroad camps, all these logging camps … I’ve been to every one of these, and I know where they’re at, but if you went to look for ’em, unless you knew where they were, you wouldn’t find them. At Woodworth, it was a huge camp. Everything’s gone. There’s nothing, and like I say, here, at Potomac, that building’s there and you see the remains of stuff there, the powerhouse remains down there by the river piece. And Camp 9, you go up here, if you didn’t know where Camp 9 was you wouldn’t see it. You get to the road junction, there’s some cement slabs. Over here at Chamberlain Camp 8, the only reasons you know there’s something there, the road has been through the middle of the camp, crosses the crek there, ther’es a concrete pedestal there for a powerhouse. So if you know where you’re looking you can find these camps. But most of them have long disappeared.

(Slide with Anaconda Forest Products log)

 (Final slide) So that’s a little credit for everybody that’s helped me gather information. I’m not trespassing on too many people. I hope not. So that’s about all I’ve got. You got questions, holler. (applause)

Tom.

**Tom Yule:** Yeah, when they were first running logs out of Placid Lake did they run them down Owl Creek out of Placid into Salmon or did they…”

**Dennis Sain:** Yes.

**Tom Yule:** And then once they got to Salmon Lake did they have some kind of towing mechanism to get the logs to the end of Salmon Lake, or how did they do that?

**Dennis Sain:** Someplace I found some information where as they got the logs from Seeley Lake and Placid Lake they rafted them up in big barges and worked them down across the lalke. I read a little information where it had taken them a week to raft the logs, and you see at the mouth of Salmon Lake the wood barrier across there, that was a splash dam. They would dam up , hold the lake level up, get the logs there, then kick the dam loose. Same thing at Placid Lake and at Seeley Lake, the splash dam they would build to hold the water back, get the logs up against there, open the dam, get a flush of water, then they’d close the dam, get the next bunch of logs. It was a long tedious process coming down and the lake is full of logs (laughs).

[00:45:25] **Unknown speaker:** Now that Woodward area, you talked about … Woodworth. Where is that in relationship to Lake Upsata? Is it near Lake Upsata, or is it west of there?

**Dennis Sain:** It’s west. You know where the Kozy Korner Bar, is, or was? Ok, you go (points to map), find it on my map here. The road over there, Kozy Korner Bar, and you go about a half a mile east, and you see some cabins along, the Dreyer Ranch is right there. OK, before you get to the Dreyer Ranch, the road turns and goes on to Boyd Mountain. About a quarter mile in, or less, less than a quarter of a mile from the county road in, is where Woodworth was.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

**Jim Habeck:** As a botanist I would go into any one of these areas and look for a bright green spot where the latrine was. (laughter) You have to know how to read the landscape. But my real question is, you didn’t mention payroll, wages kind of thing. And this business of working for the Company, I don’t think I would pull on the crosscut very long if I was being paid per hour. And I think in the Norman Maclean book they talked about gyppo logging, harder work and longer hours would pay you a higher wage. Would you discuss the income that these guys received, one way or the other?

**Dennis Sain:** Well, on the gyppo they did on their crosscuts. These guys, you realize pulling a crosscut all day, two guys, you have to work together. And in the Maclean book, talks about these two guys were not the best of friends. The one guy could beat the other guy silly if they got into a fight, but the younger guy, there were times when you’re cutting, you can make that saw work just a little hard, if you do a little work on your end it makes his end that much harder to work.

Sawyers to beat day’s pay, I don’t know what the pay rate was then. But sawyers got paid so much a day, but if you wanted to go gyppo, that was an option you could take.

**Jim Habeck**: Are you talking about 15 cents an hour, or 20 cents an hour?

**Dennis Sain:** I don’t know what the pay rate was then, but yeah, that would … probably 25 cents an hour back in the ‘30s, I would guess. And it, the crosscutting was, when they first got the first chainsaws, you know it took two men to a crosscut. When they got the first chainsaws it was two men to a chainsaw. They had a handle on the other end of the bar and a lot of them had a pivot. You could not turn the saw on its side, the carburetor’d cut out. The improvement in the chainsaw carburetors, now you can turn the saw upside down and still saw. But then the early saws they had two handlebars on one end, one handle on the other end, and they had a pivot that you could turn the saw. (Old saw held up, laughter as Anna Sain holds up a crosscut saw)

You could turn your saw on the bar from vertical for cutting through a log, where you take one notch, turn it to start your undercut, and you could turn it again flat. So you could cut the tree, but you could not tip your saw. And there were two men for a long time. And then finally they got the idea, well, one man can handle this, and then they started improving the carburetor. So, all right, you could tip it a little bit and cut and you get it on the side and cut. Now you can turn them upside down and cut.

So just that improvement alone, I mean the saws… a two-man crew, there was more sawyers in the woods than anybody because it took a lot of sawyers just to keep up with the skidding. Once they started getting Cats on the job … the first Cats, all they did, they had the skidways, chutes that roll the logs in. The horse would pull the logs down the skidway. They might stack two or three logs, put what they called trail dog in the last log, and they'd push the logs down the skidway. Well, then they first got these, they were little Cats, little tiny ones. And so then they would hook a Cat up. A Cat could pull twice as many logs faster than a horse down that skidway, and then, pretty quick now in the North Fork of Elk Creek. Well, I've been to that logging camp. It's about a mile and a half from the road. The railroad grade went up. You start, go through the gate and walk up.

You see the railroad grade goes through the meadow and up there's a concrete pedestal back there where the camp was. I hunted in there and now we're sticking to them Cats. So I'd skidded with the Bearcat. When I first started skidding logs and it scares the hell outta you on that steep ground.

I looked at some of the steep ground they run with them little tiny Cats. You can still see skid trails up in the North Fork of Elk Creek, where they had come off the hill down to the railroad with them little Cats. They didn't even have a canopy then. I mean, when I first started the canopies basically kept some of the raindrops off your head. If you ever tipped the Cat over it'd squash you. The last Cats I run, you could tip the Cat over and as long as you stayed inside, you were okay. The Cats made a big difference in the logging at that time. Anything else? Kim.

[00:51:42] **Kim Briggeman:** In one of your last slides there, you had the people at McNamara, standing. Can you tell us how to get from here to there?

**Dennis Sain:** (at McNamara photo) Well, that is a good question. You go out here, you get in your car and you drive up to Johnsrud. Take the Johnsrud road, go past Johnsrud Park, there's a cliff, and you see Gold Creek coming into the river. You drive around that cliff and at the one-mile mark on McNamara Road was camp.

And if you go around that cliff and look down towards the river, you see some old railroad grades down in there. One railroad grade closer to the road, and then one down along the river where they dumped the logs, and right at the one mile… I bet if I go, well, I went all the way past the end. (Returns to McNamara camp photo) The one-mile mark is right in there and there's, you can see the powerhouse. There's some concrete left right there. You park on the big wide spot on that turn. You could park and walk out there. This is where I took the logging camp tours and we walked on along this railroad grade and there was a railroad grade there.

The ash pit was right in there. They serviced the locomotives there, but they had a Y-track. Went out through the brush out to that dirt pile where they repaired them locomotives. And before the logging (road?) was built, there was two tracks. I had fished there as a kid after the tracks were gone, went back there almost to the next cliff. There was two tracks siding, went all the way back there. And there were times when I would grade that road I would dig up material and I would pick up railroad car parts. The big thing was brake shoes, found a lot of brake shoes off the railroad cars. I would bring some home, I had to stack them at home for a while, and one time I had a stack about 10 of them set up along the road. And then one day they kind of disappeared. Somebody hauled them off.

While I was working on grading what they call the Range Road, the road to Garnet from the top of Greenough to Garnet. That’s 10 miles. The BLM had just taken over control of the river corridor here from Plum Creek. And I'd talked to him about a lot of the history stuff. So one night after work we met ‘em [BLM rep] down by the Roundup Bar and we drove all the way to Nine Mile Prairie. I showed ‘em where the railroad crossing, where they crossed the river, where Sunset was. And what's left of the Sunset Depot is a little tiny shack set out there in Milwaukee orange and brown. And I showed them all the railroad sidings and showed them where Camp 10 was and where they filmed the movie “Timberjack” up at Belmont, showed them Belmont water tower and on down.

We got down to here and explaining everything and how I had found them brake shoes. And the one BLM guy, “God, I would like to have one of them brake shoes just as a collector's item." Well, Maria (Craig), the archeologist for BLM, little bit didn't like that remark too well. Says, "Well, picking up an artifact is a $20,000 fine on BLM ground." So I told him politely, I says, “Tomorrow I will bring you a pre-BLM brake shoe.” (Laughter) And at that time I decided it was best not to tell her that my granddaughter had found this pin before BLM. So if you go up there with a metal detector and wanna look around, you can go look for stuff, but don't tell anybody you found anything. Anything else there? I got one, one call out.

[00:56:08] **Glenn Max Smith:** I’ve got one comment. I was fortunate enough to be with you and Anna that day (at McNamara Landing). We went to here and what I found fascinating is the big building in the back where the old couple is posed in front of the locomotive. What you can find today when the snow melts away, you can see the remnants of that chimney that sticks up out of that big building. So it's all laying down into the dirt now. The building is decayed away, but those bricks, it's very obvious that that's where that site is. So I enjoyed, and I have to compliment both of you folks. Done a great job that day.

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah. This building for many years, right there, this burned down. There must have been seven or eight old, the metal spring bed frames laying there for many years. People, I think, have hauled them off now. But you could see, they'd been burnt when that building burnt down, so whether they'd left it standing, my one regret is that building there, when they had me scarify and everything, I didn't pay much attention. So any artifacts that are probably in here, I have really disturbed with that D6.

Any more questions? Anything?

**Unidentified speaker:** Was there a camp east of the Woodworth schoolhouse that turned off and went into on the Boyd Mountain side?

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah, there was, I know where you’re talking .. We built a road across the swamp there on a railroad grade. I don't know, it was a big railroad landing. But it's so close to Woodworth it probably wasn't a camp. If you went around on Boyd Mountain...

**Unidentified speaker:** Because I've been in there where that was at.

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah. There was a railroad grade, went all the way down and then it forked and went over there to Camp Seven, and then it went up to the top of a little pothole lake up there. They had a railroad car camp where they had bunk cars parked. And we built road up there. I see two railroad sidings side by side and that was a pretty steep railroad grade coming down outta that canyon, probably 8 or 9%.

**Unidentified speaker:** The head end of that railroad track where it's dead ended up in there is called Oscar's Landing.

**Dennis Sain:** Right. Yeah. I don't know if they had, I think they had a camp right up where the county road makes the turn. Where you would go. I think there was a camp right in there. They, somebody - Skilly mentioned something about it one time - and then it went around, because Oscar's Landing was a big landing. They took a lot. Well, actually the road goes around Boyd Mountain. Above the highway they had a skid road that they skidded probably three quarters of a mile to Oscar's Landing with their Cats.

**Unidentified speaker:** I knew a guy that sold; I used to have the stores up at Seeley Lake years ago. He drove one of the first Cats they had up there, and he said it took a half a day to make one drag.

**Dennis Sain:** Oh yeah. They skidded a long ways compared to what they skid now. When I first started skidding logs on the Cat we had some probably three-quarter of a mile long skids. But a lot of that we skidded tree length. And you would get six or eight trees. We were talking wood (laughs) and you get six or eight trees, and some of the steep ground and we had the bigger Cats with the better winches and stuff. You could pick up eight, 10 trees and get them to the bottom of the mountain. Then you'd have to drop about half of them, take them into the landing and come back and get the rest because it was a lot of them, it was super steep. If you go up here in Dirty Ike, you drive up the bottom of Dirty Ike and make the turn out of the bottom, go up the hill. You look back across the canyon. We skidded that with Bear Cats. It was a real pucker factor, I tell you. (Laughter)

**Jim Habeck:** One of the things you didn't mention at the beginning was the alternate section of ownership. You look at a map, just a couple of, a Forest Service map or any other kind of map. A couple of decades ago you'd see red, pink, green, all sorts of different colors. And the reason that the company acquired all these alternate sections, they’ve become a real-estate agent now. You didn't get into that part, and that's how they had to get from a company-owned section to company-owned section, which could be separated by somebody else's ownership. It got complicated.

**Dennis Sain:** Well, the company had acquired a lot of land up at Placid Lake. There's a lot of solid ownerships up in Gold Creek there's a lot of solid ownerships. Over the years, there has been some property swaps just to consolidate ownerships.

**Jim Habeck:** Well, that certainly happened in the upper Rattlesnake in order to consolidate this into the recreation wilderness area. But back in 1920 or even earlier, some of that was government given to the company for having built the railroad.

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah. That was NP land. There was a lot of NP, and the company started acquiring land they were picking up NP land as well. I mean, there was still a lot of private or so-called NP land scattered amongst it. Up in Gold Creek the company owned everything. Basically from the highway to about 13 miles back up Gold Creek. That was all company ground and...Then there was some NP ground which turned to BN. And then there was some Forest Service behind that.

**Jim Habeck:** Was there any kind of stealing logs from other people’s property?

**Dennis Sain:** Oh, yeah. That went on. Up in Belmont the Company got in the ringer a little bit. There was a state section and Harold was logging up in that state section. The Company had a nice marking system. They had a Two-Dot Line, they called it. Tree markers would go out and with blue paint paint two dots on the tree, all the way around the block pretty regular, so you could see the Two-Dot line. That was (for) the sawyers cutting it. When they got to that they were supposed to stop. Well, in Belmont they missed some Two-Dot cutting. They got on some state ground and, of course, that little piece of state ground was much bigger wood, and they took off probably about eight truck loads, and the state come up and it was triple stumpage they had to pay the fine for whatever them big logs were, they had to pay triple the stumpage of what the value was on ‘em.

[01:03:32] There was some timber stealing done down Lolo, in Lolo Canyon. The Company as we start building roads down Lolo, we come upon some logging sites on Company ground that they had an idea who logged them, but they couldn’t prove it. There was quite a bit of wood taken out of several draws down there. Hunger Creek, that was on Company ground. Somebody else logged it. They thought they knew who it was but they weren’t certain, so you can’t prove it. But there was timber hauled off Company ground. The Company cheated a little

**Jim Habeck:** It’s like politics. People steal from one another.

**Bill Taylor:** Dennis?

**Dennis Sain:** Bill.

[01:04:14] **Bill Taylor:** Just to add to that. This goes back to the very beginning of white man history in this part of the world. The government gave the land to the NP Railroad to offset building costs before there was anybody out here. And the way that program was structured, it not only gave the right of way, alternating sections along the right of way, but if it was rough terrain like most of western Montana is, those alternaitnig sectiosn went out 50 miles from the right of way. And if the land was already owned by somebody when the railroad got here, and there were many homesteads and mining claims and so on in Montana, that was offset and that’s why you end up with these alternating sections clear over into Idaho down there on the Lochsa River. And the idea was to the government that NP would sell these or get the timber off of them to pay the costs of building the railroad, which they did. But I think something we’ve lost track of today is Plum Creek Timber is the holder of what’s left of the NP land grants. That corporate machination that BN went through when they stripped off all the resource companies out of the premerger railroads, Plum Creek’s what ended up with all that. So that land they’re selling to us for developments now, around Placid Lake and so on, originally most of that was these land grant lands.

And just one other thing I’ll mention: This business of stealing timber, it took the government years to survey all of that land grant land. And when the railroad came through in 1883 that process hadn’t even begun. So our friend A.B. Hammond founder of Missoula (sic) and the Big Blackfoot mills, who with Marcus Daly, we all know him, and William Clark, we all know him, formed the Northwest Improvement Company and took contracts to build ties for the NP Railroad, and most of that timber all came off government sections before it was surveyed. In fact, there was quite a little stink about that a few years later that led to part of that ongoing feud between Daly and Clark and Hammond. That’s why Hammond went to Oregon. So it’s a convoluted history, and I’m sorry to say so much. But there ain’t no simple answer to that stealing logs business.

**Anna Sain:** You’ve just heard from Bill Taylor, who’s written three books on the early railroad years.

**Bill Taylor:** Thank you for the plug, Anna.

**Dennis Sain:** Anybody else? Willie.

**Willie Bateman:** Dennis, was that just a spike camp that, remember that one time you and I were talking about up there in Arkansas Creek?

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah, I think that was. There was a small camp just off the railroad grade in Arkansas.

**Willie Bateman:** Yeah.

**Dennis Sain:** It was a small… I have an idea it was just to get the logs down to … Because the railroad grade is about a quarter of a mile below that.

**Willie Bateman:** Yeah. Okay.

**Dennis Sain:** In Potomac there was a lot of little camps strung out.

**Willie Bateman:** Yeah. Last time I was in there that’s where I found that broadaxe blade, you know?

**Dennis Sain:** Well, I found that giant meat cleaver with the chunk broke out of the middle that’s up in the History Center. That came from a legal logging camp. That was ACM camp. (laughs)

**Unknown speaker:** Sure. Sure. We know Dennis. (laughter)

**Dennis Sain:** We have Scott Kuehn come up here. We need a little introduction of Scott Kuehn. He’s our resident forester out at Fort Missoula.

**Scott Kuehn** (at the podium): A lot of what Dennis was talking about, the slide jammer, the library car, the, yeah, they call it the Gallopin Goose. Those are all out there. Some have been restored. So part of our living history at the museum, we operate the sawmill two or three times a year. One’s coming up April 29, what we call Forestry Day. This will be our 21st year and we run the sawmill, a whole bunch of the old hit-and-miss engines come out, and we also run it Fourth of July.

So April 29 this year, that new $40 million park sitting right there, that’s their opening day too. So there from noon to 4, we’re going to run the sawmill probably 10 or 11 on. But also about 20 some years ago we moved the University of Montana Woodsmen team out there. So on Friday the college starts their events, and then Saturday as part of our Forestry Day, is we have the only pro-am logger sports show in the country, so all the guys you see on ESPN are coming, plus about a dozen colleges come out. So the old-time crosscuts are still in use.

**Dennis Sain**: I guess that’s all. We have goodies and … Jim.

**Jim Habeck:** One of the words you didn’t use were “river pigs.”

**Dennis Sain:** I was one for a while. I worked in the river in the mill.

**Jim Habeck:** They are the ones that set up the competition that is out at Fort Missoula of burling. Log rolling.

[01:10:05] **Dennis Sain:** Right. We tried that when we were on the river, but we used real logs. I mean, these are scaled-down logs that they use. We tried it with each other on the river a few times and a few of us went swimming. And there was a little factor that these great big logs that we dumped, three and four-footers in the river. They would, three or four-foot diameter log, you might have four inches of it sticking out of the water. And my cousin worked there for awhile and we got him a couple of times. He'd jump on them logs and he'd make a mad dash soon as they started to sink and told him, those big logs are only gonna sink. You're only gonna be about three, four inches deep in the water. It's not going over the top of your boots. Don't worry about it.

Now, found one big tamarack that I think was about ready to go to the bottom of the river. He jumped on that and after I told him, don't worry about it. Well, got up almost to his knees. He decided what time to jump and you couldn't jump when you got that much water. (Laughter)

**Jim Habeck:** When the dams were taken out, there were thousands of logs that came all the way down through the Clark Fork, even west of town. You still see them. So that's visible history sitting right there. They're a three-foot diameter in some cases.

**Dennis Sain:** Yeah. I mean, some of them logs are over a hundred years old, been in the river. Some of the pictures that you've seen we have of where the weigh station is at Bonner, in the old days, the highway used to run right along the edge of the river, not where it does now. And there's photographs of logs clear up to the edge of the highway, decked in the river right there. So it …

**Jim Habeck:** I figure some had sunk from just being waterlogged to a point where they were no longer floatable until the dams were taken out, and then each flood season released a bunch of them.

**Dennis Sain:** Well, even when I worked on the river, they would shut down in August for two weeks. Shut down, and we would drain the pond. And the first days after they opened the dam and drained the pond, we would go out there and it had the railroad jammer for unloading logs at that time and take tongs off the railroad jammer. Which pair of tongs, Willie or Tom brought in here? And we'd run out across them sunken logs and skid them logs and they'd pile them out. Them sunk logs were a lot worse to walk on than the regular because they were slimy. The bark was coming off. You jump on them with your caulk (cork) boots and you're up to your knees in mud, and that was not good mud.

We get all the logs out. First thing we do, you could look at the forest of peaveys. When you're out there, if a log started, you turn a log and it got away from you, don't fight it. Let go of your peavey because it's gonna - you could get hurt or you're going swimming. So they drain the pond. First thing, you go out there and look the next day there's a forest of peaveys because when you lost them, they went down. Peaveys [are] heavy on one end and stuck straight up in the air. Go out, gather up all the peaveys, skid the logs, and then we would clean the pond.

They had a giant bucket that they would hook onto the railroad jammer and had that big double-drum D7 down they used to raise and lower the gates on the dam, tie that on, and we had D8 with a winch on a wall out there, and we'd pull that big bucket up, drop it in the pond, and it’d pull that down and we'd control where it went in the pond. By that D8 we'd control where it went in the pond.

Not [an] environmentally sound idea. We would pull all that mud down. They had a crew of guys with fire hoses washing the mud down the river that we sucked out of the pond. (laughs)

(Outro music and credits)



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