



BOUNDARY COUNTY  
*Historical Society*

P. O. Box 808  
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805

Join your local  
museum . . . preserve  
your cultural heritage!



*Boundary County Historical Society and Boundary County Museum*

# Time Capsule

## Visit the New & Improved Boundary County Museum

Since its remodel last year, the Boundary County Museum uses period rooms, exhibits and displays to present the accumulated history of Bonners Ferry and the surrounding area.

Through a generous gift the museum size was recently doubled and redesigned to provide and even

more enjoyable trip through Boundary County history. The museum has come a long way since it's opening in 1974 in the basement of the library and with your help will continue to flourish.

This past winter the much awaited research room was established and is ready and waiting for anyone who is

researching local family history, looking for a photo of the giant sturgeon that used to roam the Kootenai River or just interested in learning more about local history.

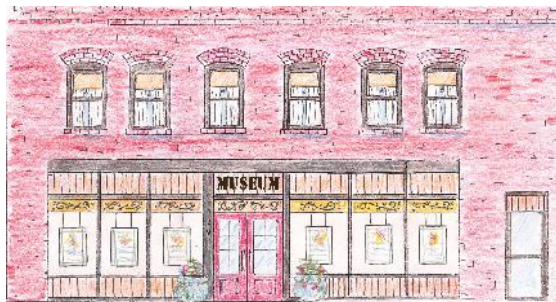
Volunteer efforts as well as monetary donations are always welcomed to keep this effort alive.

## Invest In Our Community Heritage

Participate in a not so  
Extreme Spring  
Makeover!



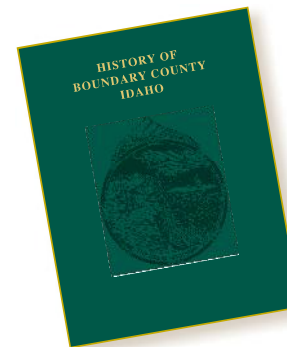
Today



Tomorrow

You can help by donating cash, materials equipment, or elbow grease  
Summer museum hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.

*The Boundary County Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization.*



## History Book Still Available . . .

History of Boundary County

Please note that there are still a few copies of the history book available. These are an excellent resource for family members who have moved away and children who will want to stay in touch with their family histories.

There are a growing number of Boundary County history-related items available in our gift shop. Stop

by and take a look at the items available for purchase -- books, notecards and many other items.



BOUNDARY COUNTY  
*Historical Society*

## From the Museum Curator

This past winter, the volunteers and I continued our exciting job of inventorying the objects in our museum. We've come across many artifacts, writings, and photographs that have caused much discussion and laughter.

The new archives room has been a place of exploration. It is really great to see the place become a resourceful tool in our continued task of preserving Boundary County history.

When you come to visit, you will see that we have once again moved a few of the objects around. This is to make room for our growing collection. We've had recent donations of county photos, local drug store bottles, and a wonderful pair of beaded moccasins made by Ann Mary (Jacob) Abraham, wife of Chief Eneas Abraham.

The 2009 summer season has begun and we are looking forward to sharing more of our Boundary County history with the people who visit our community museum.

We opened with our summer hours, Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 to 4:00, on May 1<sup>st</sup>. That evening we had a program on David Thompson presented by Tom Sandberg.

Come on down to the museum to visit or volunteer. Help us research Boundary County history. You never know what you might find.



Sue Kemmis, Museum Curator

## Current Board Members

President, Jill Nystrom  
 Vice President, Mike Sloan  
 Secretary, Gini Woodward  
 Treasurer, Orrin Everhart  
 Stephen Fendos  
 LaMar Olsen  
 John Standal



## The Kootenai Valley Railroad

by Howard Kent

In 1897 when parties of surveyors were observed in the area, rumors of another railroad began to circulate. The rumors became fact the following year.

The Kootenai Valley Railroad, a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railroad, connected Bonners Ferry to the southern end of Kootenai Lake at a location known as Kuskanook Landing. The route followed the east side of the Kootenai Valley to Porthill and into British Columbia. Passengers and freight made connections at Porthill, Rykerts, and Kuskanook Landing. From those points steamboats made stops at different locations around Kootenai Lake. James Hill, president of the Great Northern, had several steamboats operating on the lake.

A spur was built off the Great Northern Railroad west of Bonners Ferry to a point just above Galena Landing. A drawbridge was constructed where the sewer line crosses the river today. The drawbridge allowed passage of the steamboats, which ironically were put out of business by the railroads. The drawbridge was replaced with a fixed railroad bridge in 1912.

Construction, which began in 1898 involved over a thousand laborers, requiring numerous camps along the route. A group of unhappy Italian laborers attempted a strike for higher wages. Although most of the demonstrations were peaceful, a couple of incidents involved knives and guns, but no one was killed. The strike fizzled and the ringleaders were either fired or run off.

Most of the rockwork was at the north end of the line. Trestles were built across the creeks which flowed from the hills into the river. The Copeland area was named for a popular railroad superintendent and a depot was built at Porthill.

The KV line was completed in 1899. Passenger and freight service to Kuskanook continued until 1913, when the termination point became Porthill. Hill had the rails and ties removed from the beds from Rykerts to Kuskanook Landing and his steamboats removed from service. Politics and competition from Canadian railroads caused the change. The old roadbed became part of the highway to Creston.

A trip from Bonners Ferry to Porthill was about four hours with frequent stops and regular derailments. The local work crew, a colorful bunch, sometimes stopped to hunt and fish along the way.

Although passenger service was discontinued in 1914, the railway continued to serve the residents of the Kootenai Valley until the 1970s. The KV transported ore from the Continental Mine, agricultural products from the valley, and logs from the forests to connecting points, returning with the mail for the residents.

Today, the Kootenai Valley Railroad is a memory. Gone are the bridge, trestles, ties, and rails, leaving hints of the old roadbed and in a few places faded painted advertisements on rock walls. Some still remember the toot of the whistle across the valley.

## Become a member . . .

At the annual meeting April 22, the Boundary County Historical Society approved changes to the bylaws which restructure the membership of the Society.

This is an exciting time for the historical society and our community museum. Volunteer time and financial support is crucial to the fulfillment of the goals of the organization.

Funds raised through the membership drive will increase programming, publish a quarterly newsletter, and improve exhibits. In future ar-

ticles of the Time Capsule, this space will list the donors, sponsors, and patrons of the historical society.

Your investment in the Boundary County Historical Society is an investment in the community as we preserve our rich cultural heritage.

Thank you for your support!

Mail to:

Boundary County Historical Society  
 P. O. Box 808  
 Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

### Membership Levels

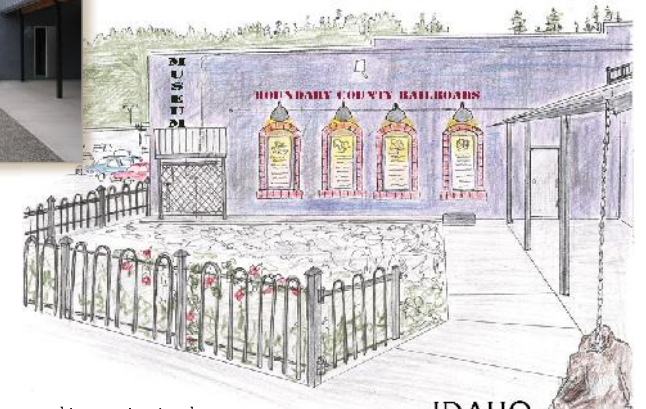
- Individual \$ 15.00
  - Family 25.00  
(1-2 adults and all children to age 17 in one household)
  - Senior Individual (65 and +) 10.00
  - Senior Couple (65 and +) 15.00
- The benefits of membership include free admission to the museum and a 10% discount at the White Caribou Gift Shop.

### Society Friend Levels

- Donor \$ 100.00
  - Sponsor 500.00
  - Patron 1,000.00
  - Additional gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_
- Check enclosed payable to Boundary County Historical Society \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## Railroad History Courtyard



Work on the next phase of the new Gateway Visitor Center Museum Entrance, the Railroad History Courtyard, will begin soon in partnership with the Bonners Ferry Rotary Club. The Courtyard will feature a railroad signal, rail work cars and interpretive signs, telling the stories of life in Boundary County through the history of the railroads.

The Idaho Humanities Council recently awarded a \$3,000 grant to the Boundary County Historical Society for the courtyard interpretive signs between

the museum and the visitor center. The signs are scheduled for completion for an ice cream social and program during the All Class Reunion, August 1st.

IDAHO  
*Humanities*  
 COUNCIL