A factory, a bridge and the name that made them legendary

By Hannah Combs
Reader Contributor

One Friday afternoon with nothing pressing to do, I turned onto the “Popsicle Bridge road.” My eyes habitually searched for a stand of aspen trees that no longer beckon with their fluttering green or golden leaves. This left me hunting nostalgically for a glimpse of something that would place me in a Sandpoint before my time, when I imagine things were quieter, quainter.

I passed an old metal barn, the blooming lilacs at its edges a balm for my malaise. Down the winding hill, I wandered out onto the bridge and was jolted with confusion. On a dozen walks along Sand Creek or canoeing through its channel, I had seen the Popsicle Bridge from a distance and told myself it was so named because as its density helped it withstand it was supported by rows of cedar the pressure of being treated, and pilings, like the Cedar St. Bridge its mild scent didn’t impact the in miniature, or a row of popsicle flavor of the ice cream.

My brain must have been Satterlee had previously forcing associations where there managed his own manufacturing were none, or I desperately needed business, Plylite Inc., in the 1950s, to visit the eye doctor. Clearly, which created birch paneling for the bridge beneath me was built home interiors.

One illusion shattered and “When I was a teenager, Bert Satterlee led a long life making birch paneling for home interiors, shown here.

All the punch presses and other machinery.”

expansion of the plant’s packaging just north of town on Airport Way added inside the building to allow set up shop in a “modern plant” Second floor space is being to form SS&P Products, Inc. They Later that year, PP&S announced, “First floor space is being mechanical engineer Bert Satterlee in the “honky-tonky piano player” and piano tuner who led a dance band in the ‘30s. He was also known for designing a steel trolley fishing rod in the late 1940s, which is considered a rare collector item today. In the ‘70s, he was the first to advocate for a Goodwill store to benefit the newly-formed senior center.

Gary Pietsch is a retired newspaper editor and small business owner who, among numerous accomplishments, has written two books on Bonner County history — both of which can be found at the museum gift shop or at bonnercountyhistory.org.

The popsicle factory was no business empire. It didn’t make men rich, and its history is chronicled in only a few short newspaper articles. But it met a unique need, and it employed more than 20 people for a short time. Like most small businesses, it made an income for local families then disappeared into obscurity over the next couple of generations.

Or it would have, if not for the association with a little bridge down the street that borrowed its name rich, and its history is chronicled in only a few short newspaper articles. But it met a unique need, and it employed more than 20 people for a short time. Like most small businesses, it made an income for local families then disappeared into obscurity over the next couple of generations.

This article was brought to you by the Bonner County Historical Society and Museum, of which Hannah Combs serves as administrator. Research provided by the Bonner County History Museum and Sandpoint’s Early History, by Gary Pietsch.