

THE INSIDE TRAIL



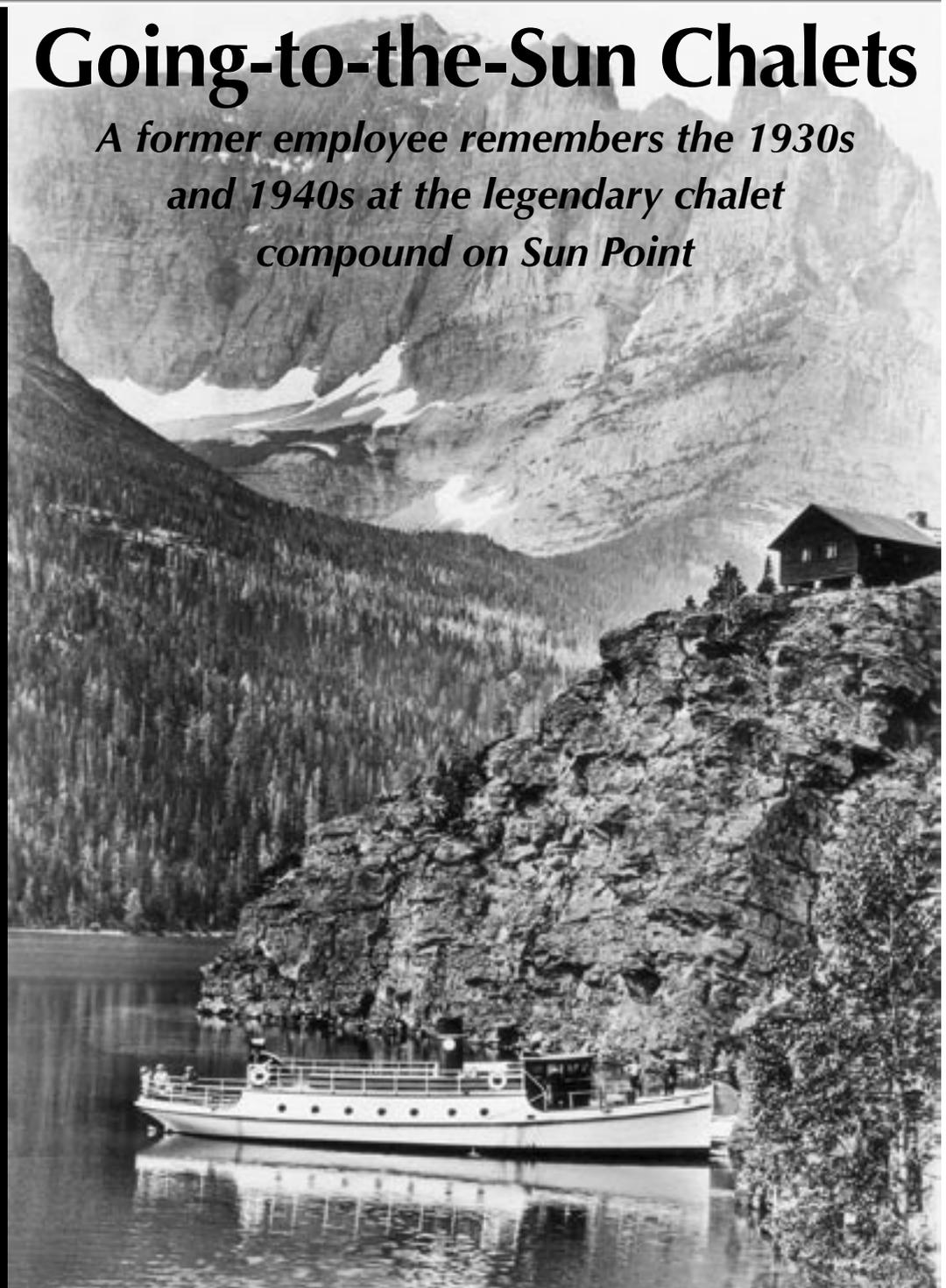
Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation □ Summer 2006 □ Volume XX, No. 2

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Going-to-the-Sun Chalets

A former employee remembers the 1930s and 1940s at the legendary chalet compound on Sun Point



The launch “St. Mary” at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, with Little Chief Mountain in the background (Hileman photo, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)

Inside News of the Summer of 2006: *Fire Blackens St. Mary Valley*

The town of St. Mary on the eastern border of Glacier National Park was nearly destroyed by a forest fire this summer. The fire roared out of the Red Eagle Valley on the south side of St. Mary Lake. It forced evacuation of the townsite, then turned eastward and blackened thousands of acres along St. Mary Ridge, along both sides of the Blackfeet Highway.

The fire was discovered on July 28. It started in or near the Red Eagle Campground, about eight miles from St. Mary. No lightning had been observed in the area, and it seems probable that the fire was started by careless campers.

Initial suppression efforts were hampered by a shortage of equipment. Bomber aircraft adapted for dropping fire suppression chemicals had been committed to large fires in other states. While fire crews and gear were being assembled, high winds rapidly blew the Red Eagle Fire out of control.

On July 31, the fire spread northward, crowning from tree to tree, and came within a mile of the St. Mary townsite. The town was evacuated, along with several campgrounds and the St. Mary Park Service compound. Going-to-the-Sun Road was closed between St. Mary and Rising Sun, and the Blackfeet Highway was closed for roughly twenty miles, from Cut Bank Campground to Babb.

Suppression efforts and a shift in the wind saved St. Mary from destruction. The town was reopened on August 3. The fire moved eastward, burning large areas along St. Mary Ridge, destroying the guardrails and burning the yellow lines off the surface of the Blackfeet Highway. It continued to burn for miles through the foothills and high plains of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

Meanwhile, about 600 firefighters, supported by helicopters and fire engines, were assembled to fight the

fire. Chewing Blackbones Campground, the fire crew's headquarters, was filled with hundreds of tents. The helicopters buzzed back and forth from dawn to dusk, trailing red 400-gallon buckets which they dipped in St. Mary Lake and then hauled off to dump on the fire.

As the winds abated, the fire sank back into the underbrush and smoldered over tens of thousands of acres. Pillars of smoke arose from dozens of "hot spots" scattered over the area. Occasionally single trees or groups of trees would kindle and flare up into dramatic torches of flame.

By late August, the fire was largely controlled, thanks in part to several drenching rains. It was mapped at nearly 35,000 acres, about half of which were inside and half outside of the park. The effects of the fire will be starkly evident for many years along the Blackfeet Highway for several miles south of St. Mary.

Glacier Park Foundation

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The Glacier Park Foundation was formed by Glacier Park employees and visitors who have a deep love for this special place. The Foundation is committed both to the importance of wilderness preservation and to the importance of places like Glacier as classrooms where people can experience wilderness in intense meaningful ways, learning not only a love for the land, but also a respect that nurtures the skills necessary to preserve that land. The Foundation has a special interest in Glacier Park's history, traditions and visitor facilities.

The Inside Trail takes its name from the famous old trail which connected Glacier Park Lodge with the vanished chalets at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, and St. Mary. The name thus emphasizes the publication's focus on the lore and history of Glacier National Park. We invite submission of historical, scientific, or anecdotal articles, commentary, poetry, or artwork for publication in future issues.

Going-to-the-Sun Chalets

Adventures in the '30s and '40s

The motor launch St. Mary approaching Sun Point, circa 1925 (Hileman photo, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)



by Don Loeffler

(Glacier Park Lodge, Sun Camp, Many Glacier, 1940-42, 46-48)

The Great Northern Railway, under the direction of James J. Hill, built the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets in 1913. The builders used local logs and stone. Early visitors would board a vessel at the St. Mary Chalets for a one-hour ride up the lake to the chalets, docking on the lee side of a prominent outcropping.

My first glimpse of Sun Camp (as the chalet compound was called)

was from the bow of the launch *St. Mary* in 1932. By that time, the road from St. Mary Chalets to Going-to-the-Sun Chalets was finished, but the approach was much more spectacular by water. My dad felt that our family would enjoy this approach while he gave us a detailed dissertation on his wanderings through those rocks and rills. He was entitled to do so since he really knew the territory.

The dock for Sun Camp was located just north of a 100-foot cliff to protect the boat from the prevailing

winds which blew down from Gunsight Mountain most of the time. Most of the chalet buildings could not be seen from the landing. When the passengers walked up the path to the registration desk they were pleasantly surprised.

The road over Logan Pass was not finished at the time of my first visit. However, work was progressing well. The noise from dynamite detonations echoed up and down the lake and probably set off avalanches on the slopes.

I remember how much fun my brother and I had throwing small rocks down into the water in front of the dining room until we got caught by our parents. An immediate halt was declared. We proceeded to see how close we could walk to the edge

My dad . . . gave us a detailed dissertation on his wanderings through those rocks and rills. He was entitled to do so since he really knew the territory.



The Loeffler family hiking along St. Mary Lake, 1932 (Don Loeffler photo)

of the cliffs without falling off until we were again apprehended and sent to our rooms.

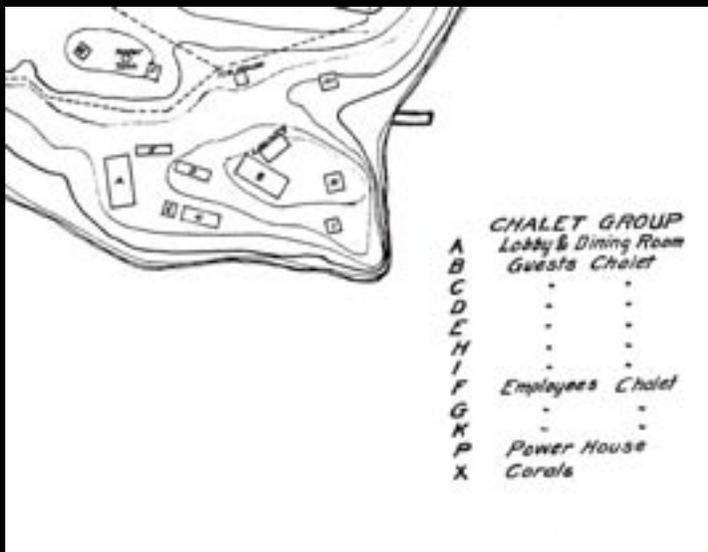
I don't remember all the arrangements on that first visit, but we must have used lanterns for a light source. There was no electricity available. I do remember the attractive-looking waitresses in their Swiss costumes.

About 80 percent of the dudes staying at Sun Camp took a little stroll .8 mile to the west to a lovely little waterfall flowing from the eastern slopes of Going-to-the-Sun Mountain. This stream cut through the red Grinnell argillite in a picturesque cleft known as Sunrift Gorge. It continued downhill spilling over a ledge of rock on its way down to the lake. This waterfall, called Baring

Falls (named after a titled Englishman who explored the area) was a "must see" on every visitor's agenda.

Many years later, in 1941, I was hired to work at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. One of my tasks was the removal by hand of rocks and gravel from the rail-mounted cradle which held the good ship *St. Mary*. Every winter, the vessel was hauled from the water for storage until the next season. The barnlike storage building was located about 100 yards southwest of the St. Mary Chalet complex. By springtime, the force of the wind and ice would have buried the rails in rocky debris. The rocks then had to be cleared in order to run the launch back into the water. I guess Mother Nature was getting back at me for all the rocks that I had thrown into the lake as a kid!

There was an interesting character in residence at Sun Camp by the name of Gus. As a youth, he had put in a stint as a "gandy dancer" on the Great Northern, and then had



Chalet configuration and boat dock at Sun Point (drawing courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)



Going-to-the-Sun Chalets from the north (photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)

ended up employed by its subsidiary, the Glacier Park Hotel Co. He was a likeable chap, full of stories out of his past. He would “hold court” nightly down at the beer parlor. I would sit at his feet and listen to his wonderful and exciting tales of the past as if he were some mystical guru from a Nepalese mountaintop. We employees held him in high esteem. He was not a mountain climber, but he could fix almost anything. His stories of the construction of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway were legendary. I should have taken notes. We never could figure out how he could open a bottle of beer with his thumb!

Gus told me about a small mountain tarn less than a hundred yards off the road just about where the turnoff is to Sun Camp. I was very interested in this information, since people rarely swam in the frigid waters of St. Mary Lake. After seeing one of the more robust bellmen take a swan dive off that hundred-foot cliff

overlooking the boat dock, and not wanting to be outdone, I once did a cannonball off the dock. That was the last time I ever even put my big toe in that icy lake.

I eagerly investigated Gus’s swimming hole. Sure enough, there it was – small, cozy, hidden, and most important, not ice cold. I led a contingent of employees (mostly female)

our conversation, I happened to mention to him that I knew of a nifty little pond to swim in near Sun Camp. Cy said that he was aware of it, and that it was the source of drinking water for the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. He strongly suggested that I take my friends elsewhere for a refreshing dip. Gus’s secret tarn now shows up on the topographical maps as Lost Lake.

[Gus] was a likeable chap, full of stories out of his past. He would “hold court” nightly down at the beer parlor. I would sit at his feet and listen to his wonderful and exciting tales of the past.

to the secluded spot after swearing them all to secrecy.

One day, Cy Stevenson, the Glacier Park Hotel Company’s Chief Engineer, stopped by. He asked if I would like to take a run over to Lake McDonald. In the course of

My room at the chalets was on the lower floor of the main building. It faced southwest and had a sweeping view of the upper portion of the lake and its attending peaks. The chalets were positioned so as to give the guests great views in every direction.

One day I hiked around the upper end of the lake to Louis Hill's cabin site on the south shore. What I found was not one cabin, but two. The prime structure was tucked neatly onto a small isthmus of land almost directly across from Sun Camp. I surmised that the smaller cabin was most likely a guesthouse, which had almost rotted away. The high winds blowing down the lake had reduced the remains to ghostly traces. The privileged few who were fortunate enough to stay there had what I considered the best views in Glacier Park. It was accessible only by foot or on horseback.

There is a delightful little hanging valley called Preston Park cradled between Mt. Siyeh on the north and

Going-to-the-Sun Mountain on the south. (I have no idea who Preston was, but he sure knew natural beauty when he saw it.) This Shangri-La setting persistently was used to perpetrate a hoax. Cy Stevenson (who probably started the whole business) first told me this mischievous tale: "Preston Park has been set aside as an amusement area complete with Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, shooting gallery, candy floss, etc., etc. It is a great place to visit when you get tired of looking at the glories of Mother Nature." Cy almost had me convinced of the existence of this amusement park, but inspection established that the tale was not true.

From that time forward I did my best to sell the concept to first-timers throughout the park. I almost had a

couple of dishwashers at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets convinced of its existence until they asked me, "Where do all the visitors park their cars?" They had me cold. I later learned that this duo had sold the idea to a couple of waitresses who they took on a hike up to Preston Park. They returned dog-tired but without any stuffed animals.

It was a sad day when the chalets were demolished after World War Two. I understand that they were bulldozed off the cliff onto the ice below and set afire. That certainly was an ignoble way to go, but the Glacier Park Hotel Company had no choice. Over the years, I have found bits of crockery and small pieces of metal at the site – mementos of a glorious past.

Dining Room at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets (photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)



Don Loeffler setting out for Glacier with his mother and brother, 1932 (Don Loeffler photo)

THE PTARMIGAN ROOM



by Ian B. Tippet (GPI 1955-2006)

I first met the honorable mayor of Tucson, Arizona, Don Hummel, on a quiet late afternoon on a Sunday in the latter part of the 1960 summer season at Lake McDonald Lodge. Glacier Park had embraced an unusually busy season with all its normal business, as well as hosting the national Governors' Conference at Many Glacier Hotel. Many of the wives' functions were at Lake McDonald.

At that time, I was the location general manager (G.M.) at McDonald, and Mr. Hummel already seemed to know a lot about me. We sat down in my office, which in those days was in the corner of the first floor balcony. He told me he was going to be purchasing the Glacier Park Company's properties, and that I would be

joining him in Tucson, Arizona, on his very small permanent staff as his "right hand." Eventually I became vice president. He told me that I would be summer-based at Many Glacier Hotel as G.M., whilst also overseeing the whole hiring process

at 10:00 am sharp, we had a conference telephone call together. She met the trains personally, did all the processing of employees as they arrived, put them to bed for the night, and dispatched employee buses next morning.

All wait staff had to have a great singing voice (most were voice majors), and we needed several brilliant pianists as accompanists.

for all properties (including the Prince of Wales Hotel and transportation) and running the personnel function.

I had one assistant for many years, Marjorie Lillibridge, who "held fort" in the personnel office at Glacier Park Lodge while I was up at Many Glacier Hotel. For countless seasons

The location G.M.s did all the training at their unit. 95% of our employees in those days were college or university students. Supervisors who often came back for years as executive chefs and the like, were in a "profit share" program that Mr. Hummel put in place. Stability was rigid. Disciplines were rigid.

(Continued from previous page)

We printed each winter 25,000 applications, as Mr. Hummel wanted student employees from every state in the union on the payrolls. Marjorie and I contacted every college and university in the USA, using Lovejoy's College Guide, and kept tabulation by state of how we were doing. We put normal emphasis on all majors, but extra emphasis on accounting, culinary arts, hotel/restaurant, history/geology (for drivers), and music/drama majors. The mail came back in to us by our postman in Tucson in long grey trays every morning by the hundreds of envelopes, and took hours to process daily.

When I first took the reins at Many Glacier in 1961, the 240-seat dining room was just called "the dining room." I had an extremely talented employee majoring in art do an oil painting of a ptarmigan in its summer coat of livery. I had it framed, and it hung over the entrance door of the dining room, now called "The Ptarmigan Room," for over 25 years. I started right away to give the room some extra character, with cushions made for seats, new draperies, and colorful mugs, steins and plates around the upper wall shelving.

All wait staff had to have a great singing voice (most were voice majors), and we needed several brilliant pianists as accompanists. Swiss-style uniforms were purchased for female wait staff. Hair had to be netted, and hospital-type white shoes were worn with their hospital-type white knee-high stockings. Before each meal, the dining room manager lined-up his whole team, inspected their dress attire, checked for clean nails, shoe cleanliness, etc, then discussed the menu selections, and

assigned, verbally, the stations.

I assigned myself to the Ptarmigan Room entrance desk for dinner service for 24 seasons to take the waiting list and help with seating. My assistant manager, Professor Roger L. Stephens, also assisted the bussers in getting the tables turned over and around ASAP. We were always dealing with over 500 diners every evening. Guests had a cocktail in the Interlachen Lounge or Swiss Lounge whilst waiting for their name to be called.

One of my model dining room cashiers in the Ptarmigan Room, from Wisconsin, Carol Repulski Dahle, was with me for many seasons. She trained all the cashiers in her marvelous and exacting standards with huge professionalism. Her traffic sheets, order check numbers, #3 pencils, and account balances were correct to the last penny—amazing!

She came on duty for the dinner shift dressed like a queen with enough creations for a different attire each evening.

In those glorious days, we had some 32 Ptarmigan wait staff, all of course with fabulous singing voices. At 7:00 p.m., near the ending of the first guest sitting, a pianist would go to the piano and "set the mood" by playing some Joplin. Gradually all the wait staff would meander down to the fireplace section and choir area in a half-moon setting. We had masses of four-part harmony works ready to belt out at any time! We might have opened with a rousing number from Oliver ..."Consider Yourself at Home" ... followed by a tenor coming out of the choir ranks to sing a solo such as "Danny Boy." The Ptarmigan Room choir repeated the whole affair at the end of second seating around 9:00 pm.



Chef Don Jacobs and his wife Bertha at a Ptarmigan Room buffet table, summer of 1978. (Rolf Larson photo)

When guests had ordered birthday cakes (we made them on site by hand), the “Happy Birthday” song was performed in four-part harmony at the guest table. We brought the cake in held high from the kitchen, and each waitperson had two sparklers lit in each hand. It was mandatory that before dinner, wait staff brush their teeth, as at the cake service the guys kissed all the women at the guest table, and the gals kissed all the men.

The spirit of the employees and the quality of the musical numbers were superb, and “got guests ready” for the ranger/naturalist talk and then the evening lobby performance or the St. Moritz Room musical production. I was amazed through all those years at the time and effort the employees gave of themselves to such fabulous events of their own accord.

Over the years, the Ptarmigan Room has hosted hundreds of special events. Amongst them was the annual Culinary Olympics on a Sunday every August. Under Glacier Park, Incorporated’s ownership by the Greyhound Dial Corporation, Chief Executive Mr. John Teets told me that he wanted all our young cooks in all Glacier kitchens to actually be majoring in culinary arts, and that went on for many seasons. The Culinary Olympics gave the opportunity for each of those talented young men and women to plan and work on their presentation piece, which on the big day was part of a massive buffet. The company judged the entries, donated many prizes, and gave recognition and encouragement to these young budding chefs for all their hard work.

To find our culinary people, we put special bulletins out to every culinary school in the USA and Canada. In

Having worked as G.M. at Many Glacier Hotel for so many years and hosted the Ptarmigan Room at dinner for all those seasons, I have huge memories of many memorable guests.

the earlier Don Hummel years, Sunday evenings were devoted to a buffet at all of our properties. We at Many Glacier flew in a huge fresh salmon from Seattle, Washington, as the table highlight. We followed dinner with an evening concert in the lobby (“Sunday Night is Concert Night”) which continued for 25 years.

A distinctive feature of the Ptarmigan Room for many years was the “blue willow” pattern china. During the Great Northern ownership days, it was shipped directly from the potteries in Staffordshire, England, in barrels on the steamship companies. We used their beautiful china in the Glacier dining rooms for many years, and we still had a large inventory of it through the later Hummel ownership. There were many large platters at Many Glacier which we used for serving the fresh fish which many guests caught themselves at Glacier. At that time, fishing was an important guest occupation. We cooked their fish provided they were scaled and cleaned.

As the years went by, the blue willow ware collection diminished. The remaining inventory was sold in the gift shops. It was disappointing to lose it, as dining room table arrangements previously were very distinctive with it, along with the heavy starched tablecloths, fresh flowers, and silver cutlery.

Having worked as G.M. at Many Glacier Hotel for so many years and hosted the Ptarmigan Room at dinner for all those seasons, I have huge memories of many memorable guests. One woman stands out in my mind, especially ... the remarkable film star, Greer Garson. She made her debut opposite Robert Donat in MGM’s “Goodbye Mr. Chips” in 1939, followed that opposite Walter Pidgeon in 1942 in “Mrs. Miniver,” and had many other successes. She had retired from stage and screen when she and her husband stayed with us, and I enjoyed having tea with her one afternoon. When she came into the Ptarmigan Room for dinner, every other guest stood up and applauded vigorously. It was a very moving experience indeed. She was, without question, one of the most gracious women I have ever met my life. Two other radio and television personalities I enjoyed having with us were Edward R. Murrow and Roger Mudd.

Handling the dinner meal with my staff was the real way for me to get to meet all of our guests and find out how we were doing! Visiting with the guests was another way of “facing the music” first hand. Also I miss the iced relish boats we presented before taking menu orders, and a few years later, the hot meat mini-balls platter for guests to munch on while deciding. I miss those wonderful days.



*So
Many People*



*So
Many People*



... So Many Memories

“ROCK!!”

Climbing in Glacier Amid the Perils of Falling Rock

by Richard Schwab (*Many Glacier* 1947-52)

Since the mountains of Glacier Park were carved out of an overthrust of thousands of layers of sedimentary rock, with one notable igneous intrusion (the diorite band), it is a geologists' paradise. What I later learned about the geological history of the Park has added much to my appreciation and understanding of the great scenes laid out before our eyes in Glacier. The awesome fact that stays in my mind as I look at them now is that a vast amount of the bulk of the mountains was once *alive!* The Siyeh Formation and other layers are made of limestone derived from the calcium produced

I have always thought of the Glacier mountains as somehow being alive or haunted by the forces of life. Although in the forties and fifties I hardly knew anything about that, I certainly enjoyed the beauties and fascination of the huge blocks of layered rock exposed in the massive shoulders of the mountains, and I was struck by the wonderful colors – reds, greens, yellows, grays, and tans – that spread out from the many sedimentary bands. They are especially notable if you look eastward from any peak or pass.

The sedimentary, and therefore crumbly, character of the rocks requires special climbing skills, although we did not as employees

many close calls with loose rock but fortunately no calamities.

My climbing in Glacier as an employee never included what would be called technical climbing, only lots of scrambling. We just liked to get to the tops of the mountains, but usually not the dangerous ones. Occasionally by accident, not by intention, we got into dangerous stretches on parts of the way up or down a peak or cliff.

In 1947, I did manage to get involved in some rope work. In that year there was only one employee, Don Loeffler, who knew anything about technical climbing, and he had a rope. At least once I found myself part of his climbing group, which included Steve Farbotnik, Joe Obenski, and Al Jurciokonis. They were experimenting with belaying and rappelling on the sheer eastern cliffs of Mt. Altyn.

The details of the actual operation are hazy in my memory, but I do recall a couple of us were standing at the base of a cliff waiting for someone to descend when suddenly we heard a shout, “Rock! Rock!” The fellow with me dove for cover toward a sort of chimney indentation in the cliff. This, it turned out, was close to

Occasionally by accident, not by intention, we got into dangerous stretches on parts of the way up or down a peak or cliff.

and deposited on the bottom of a great sea by uncounted trillions of ocean creatures. That knowledge makes the peaks seem to shimmer and vibrate with life in my imagination.

Perhaps the living origins of major parts of their sediments explains why

think comparatively about climbing conditions in Glacier as opposed to more solid rock formations elsewhere. In sedimentary slopes and cliffs close attention has to be paid always to the danger of loose or falling rocks on any climb. We had

Index of photos for “The Ptarmigan Room:” page 7— Interior Secretary James Watt leans on Dining Room Manager Milt Crotts while singing “This Land is My Land” in 1982 (Milt Crotts photo); page 10, clockwise from upper left – Phil Reed atop a pyramid of waiters in 1975 (Leanna Miles Preston photo); Joyce Daugaard, 1972 (Dave Pierson photo); Carol Repulski Dahle, 1973 (John Cotham photo); Bill Rollie, 1972 (Dave Pierson photo); Tessie Bundick and Steven Schultz, 2006 (Steven Schultz photo); Doug Peterson, Steve White, Greg Landis, 1972 (Dave Pierson photo); Margie Goergen, 1972 (Dave Pierson photo); Milt Crotts, 1981 (Milt Crotts photo); Ann Littlefield and Cliff Reykdal, 1973 (John Cotham photo); Mary Brumby Stephens and Kathy Stapleton Renno, 1972 (Dave Pierson photo); the 1973 staff under Many Glacier’s emblematic Swiss flag (John Cotham photo)

being fatal for him, because a huge rock crashed down only inches from his head where he was lying against the cliff. That shook us up a bit.

The really memorable event that day, though, resulted from the fall of a large white boulder which had been loosened by the rope or by a climber's foot. By that time there were three or four of us sitting with our backs to the base of the cliff, and we watched the boulder breaking up a bit as it bounded a considerable distance down the scree below us and disappeared into some brush not far from the Babb road, which runs fairly close to the south and east face of Altyn.

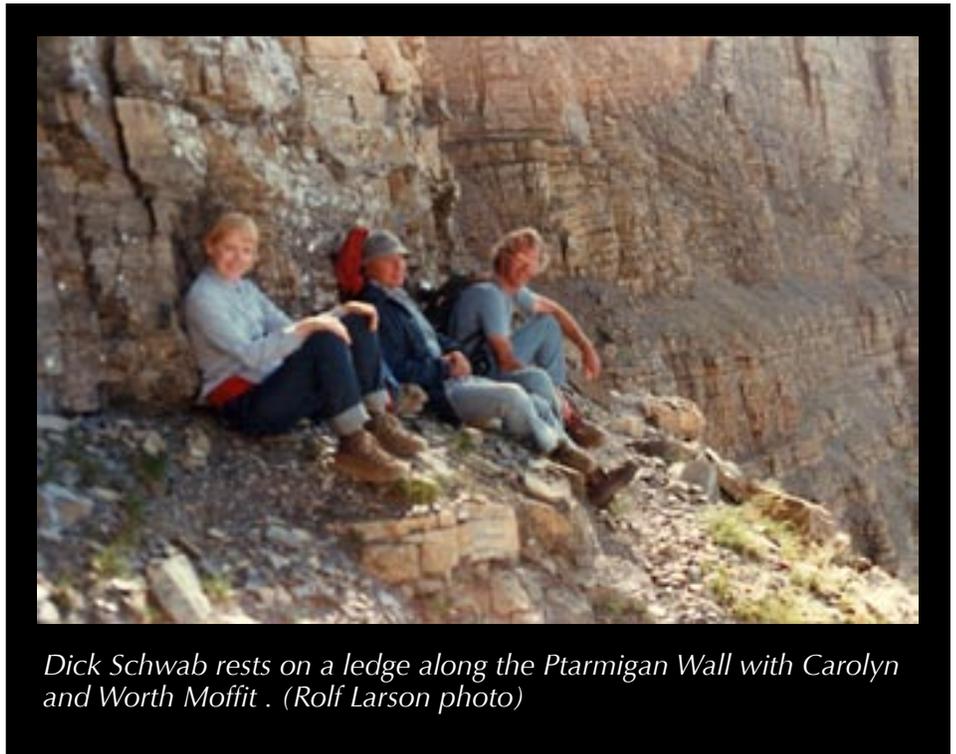
We thought the boulder had stopped in the brush, but it had not. By a sort of diabolical accident of timing a large limousine was moving ponderously along the road toward Many. Just at the wrong moment the rock, still with a good deal of momentum, popped out onto the tar directly in front of it. It was too late to stop the car, and before our disbelieving eyes the white rock disappeared underneath it. Everyone was wincing and groaning, and suddenly someone exclaimed, "Where's the rock?"

The limousine had continued on its stately way for quite a distance with the rock apparently stuck in its undercarriage. And then we all let out a yell of astonishment as we saw it bounce out from under the other side of the car. It was now *completely black!* "Oil!" someone gasped. "It must have ruptured the oil pan!" Still the limousine cruised forward and disappeared around the shoulder

of the mountain in the direction of the hotel.

Now Farbotnik, Obenski, and Jurciokonis, one or more of them, apparently had already had a run-in with the rangers, and they muttered, "Let's get *out* of here." We all scattered down the scree and talus and made our ways back to the

dormitory or Swiftcurrent campground as unobtrusively as possible. No rangers tracked us down, and I never heard another thing about the limousine. I have often wondered whether it was patched up at the gearjammers' compound or whether it had to be hauled out by wrecker to Cardston, Browning, or Great Falls.



Dick Schwab rests on a ledge along the Ptarmigan Wall with Carolyn and Worth Moffit . (Rolf Larson photo)

By that time there were three or four of us sitting with our backs to the base of the cliff, and we watched the boulder breaking up a bit as it bounded a considerable distance down the scree below us. . . .

FROM GLACIER TO GOTHAM in 1911



*Blackfoot travelers
in New York City
(photo, courtesy of the
Minnesota Historical
Society, Great Northern
Railway collection)*

Louis Hill and the Blackfeet at the New York Land Show

*By Tessie Bundick (Many Glacier
1972-80)*

In 1911, a much anticipated, well publicized, very grand agricultural show was held at Madison Square Garden in New York City from November 3-12. This extravaganza, which was called the American Land and Irrigation Exposition, was organized to display the majestic and lavish bounty of the earth for all to admire.

The Great Northern Railway, with Louis W. Hill as president, was front and center as an enthusiastic participant, eager to show off the agricultural wonders of the Midwest and the fields along the route of its vast rail system to the west. In addition, the Great Northern also displayed a gallery of paintings, interspersed with the corn and rye, trumpeting the

splendors of Glacier National Park, along with some fascinating artifacts from the Blackfeet Indian nation.

Louis Hill, a prodigious and talented promoter, instigated the idea of bringing a group of senior members of the Blackfeet tribe to New York, mainly as a publicity strategy. The Montana reservation of these people shared a border with Glacier National Park, a beautiful Rocky Mountain place on the Great Northern line, that Hill hoped to develop for tourism.

The “official” reason for the trip would be to enlighten the Native Americans as to the glories of farming so that they might return to their Montana home and instill the agricultural work ethic in their people. The Blackfeet had been “given” farms on their 500,000 acre reservation and it was felt that they needed aid

in making a living from this land. Louis Hill was quoted in the Illustrated Buffalo Express concerning this subject. Genuinely sympathetic to the cause of the Blackfeet, who had been famous for their age-old hunter lifestyle, he said, “If this is to be, a helping hand is what they most need now, and proper guidance will be a great factor in adjusting them to such a complete change in their mode of living.”

Hill also seemed truly interested in preserving the traditional culture of these people. He made a point of collecting artifacts and was inducted into the tribe, as the Blackfeet returned his respect. Hill had encouraged the tribe to hold a “final” grass dance that year, as the reservation was to be thrown open to white settlement in the spring of

1912. The ceremony, traditionally performed to ask for abundant grass for the buffalo, was even recorded on Hill's orders, using 5000 feet of film.

The experiment of taking this native group to New York was sanctioned by the U.S. government and was to be watched with interest by President Taft and Secretary of the Interior Fiske. The official word was that a trip to the Land Show would help the Blackfeet to "see for themselves what agriculture really means."

And so, with much ado, several tribal elders were introduced to a stunned New York City in grand style. Five Blackfeet, Horse Ghost, Killed Twice, Iron Whip, Spotted Eagle and Crows Twice, in full ceremonial dress, complete with war bonnets, were marched into City Hall on November 2, 1911, to meet with the Mayor. As they made their way through the building, they caused gasps of amazement from the bystanders. Little boys ran alongside of them and one brave child actually plucked at the fringe of one of the leather shirts, only to receive an icy stare.

Finally, this colorful party made its way to the appointed destination and their rendezvous with Mayor

Gaynor. This official, by way of awkward introduction, promptly asked the Montana delegation, "You like big city. Have good time. See nice places?" One of the addressees, a highly educated Carlisle graduate, looked directly at the mayor (who was embroiled in a much publicized scandal) and said, "Is it true, may I ask, that certain politicians connected with your government here have been accused of obtaining money in ways not compatible with their oath

Arthur E. Stilwell. The guests of this glittering affair were an assembly of governors, senators, railroad men and bankers, who were in New York to attend the show.

The beautifully dressed Montana fivesome made their way to the president's table. They brought grapes and pumpkins as gifts, supposedly grown on their own farms.

The Blackfeet were a stunning main attraction and the actual Land

[T]heir appearance in New York City was a promotional stunt for the Great Northern, and more, specifically for Glacier National Park. And, more than likely, it was highly effective.

of office?" The Mayor quickly closed the interview with a few good wishes and brief words of encouragement.

The services of the Blackfeet were also employed at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in the evening of that day. On the same program was the Mormon Tabernacle Choir (the young ladies section). The tribal members were introduced into the ballroom, where a dinner was being held by the Land and Irrigation Exposition president,

Show. If they did, indeed, "learn" anything from their exposure to this vast cornucopia of agricultural wealth and might, then perhaps it was worth all the trouble. The point is – they already knew how to farm on their reservation, so really, their appearance in New York City was a promotional stunt for the Great Northern, and more, specifically for Glacier National Park. And, more than likely, it was highly effective.



The Land and Irrigation Exposition at Madison Square Gardens, 1911 (photo, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)

The GPT Company at Many Glacier *in the Early '50s*



The author in 2004 with a classic Glacier Park limousine (Jack Chamberlain photo)

by Jack G. Chamberlain (Glacier Park Transport, 1952, '54)

For decades in the mid-20th century, the Glacier Park Transport Company (GPT Co.) was managed efficiently by Howard Hays and Fred Noble. The company operated the 1936 red buses and classic limousines that carried tourists from hotel to hotel. Many Glacier Hotel was the Valhalla of the Park due to its outstanding accommodations, camping, hiking, employees, pristine beauty and isolation – 12 miles from the nearest “highway” at Babb.

GPT Co. had a large garage, gas pump, employees’ dormitory, and parking lot at Many Glacier. The wonderful Mr. and Mrs. Porter staffed the dormitory (the present Upper Dorm at Many), which had its own kitchen and cafeteria. They taught school for nine months each year in Idaho and cooked at the Many Glacier Transport Dorm in

the summer. Their sumptuous food, friendliness and knowledge of the flowers and natural history of the Park was a real blessing. The dorm was a two-story, totally wooden structure. Each of the upstairs sleeping rooms had a “fire escape” -- a knotted, two-inch-thick rope, 20 feet long, tied to a wall stud and coiled under the single window! The front room or lounge area was stocked with books and games (used especially on stormy days).

For years, the Transport Agent at Many was the one and only, indomitable legend, Mr. Sid Couch. He got the buses off on time at the hotel and also was the official “dorm boss.” He saw to it that tables were set and basic cleaning was done at 6 AM each morning before anyone had breakfast. If you were a slugabed or a laggard, Sid would admonish you in colorful language (especially if others were within earshot).

Although he taught accounting, Sid was legally blind (20/200). He always wore thick “coke bottle” glasses but never missed a thing. He claimed that he could memorize eye charts at the Department of Motor Vehicles. He would get a student to go with him on the day of his driving test to tell him the letters on the eye chart, which Sid then memorized. He always had three things at Many Glacier – a valid driver’s license, a chauffeur, and a three-breasted, brown suit. He was a wonderful, proud, humorous man who is missed.

In the early ‘50s, I was a biology student at Occidental College in Los Angeles. I was always looking for a mountainous retreat from the heat, the newly growing crowds and the smog. A friend introduced me to Sid Couch, and I was hired for the summers of ‘52 and ‘54. In both summers, I reported to East Glacier, where I was assigned a red and black

limousine – a 1931 LaSalle in '52 and a 1930 Lincoln in '54. These vehicle assignments were made by a huge Blackfeet Indian, the longtime chief mechanic for GPT Co. – the one and only, fearsome Gene Kracaleea! He simply gave me a map and told me to go to Many Glacier to be under Sid's tutelage there.

My title was "assistant mechanic." My job was to make sure the buses were gassed and lined up in the morning in the parking lot for the gearjammers. I also was to chauffeur Sid and others to and from the hotel some 500 yards away and to drive VIPs to Babb or to the Swiftcurrent cabins. I occasionally had the job of rushing clients who had overslept to board a bus which was already en route.

I remember well once tending to a bus that was low on oil and changing the fluid but not the filter. The very next afternoon, Gene Kracaleea drove the 50-odd miles from East Glacier to Many to have words with me: "Oil and filters are ALWAYS CHANGED TOGETHER!" The drivers feared the guy, but after three months or so I found him understandable and even likeable. My visits to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation town of Browning enlightened me about his life in Montana.

In addition to my other jobs, I volunteered to take the weekly trash from the dorm to the open pit dump – at that time just a mile down the road toward Babb. As a young biologist, I wanted to observe the bears that came to feast on the garbage. I would go alone in the early morning or at dusk so as to study their appearance and movements as closely as possible. I was lucky, I guess, as I had only benign meetings with

bears both on the trail and at the open dump. At the dump the bears were well fed and busy augmenting their usual diet with steak. They had little concern for a guy standing near a classic car 20-30 feet away with a camera – or so I thought.

During the summers, I also had time off to explore the mountains and the wildlife. In the early spring, I used to watch the herds of mountain sheep romping in the snow above the hotel. The males always lined up their horns to me if I got too close!

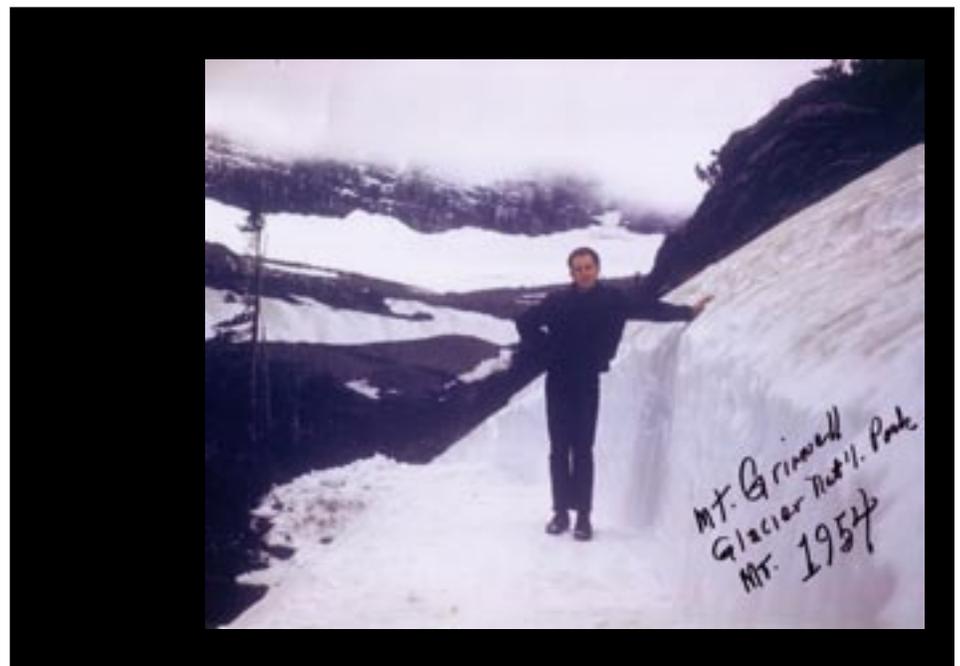
It took me most of each summer to adjust to "swimming" in the Swiftcurrent glacial tarn. The water was bitterly cold all summer. I would immerse first a foot, then a leg, and so on each week. I don't recall ever seeing anyone outright swimming in that lake.

I also played hours and hours of cribbage with the drivers and with Sid. Sid played only bridge in LA and only cribbage at Many. Few people could beat him. I did, maybe once or twice during the entire sum-

mer, and his face would get red for hours. When he and I teamed up as doubles – forget it.

At night, we often ended up downstairs at the hotel lounge where we'd dance until closing. Then we'd go off on foot to the Swiftcurrent campground with leftover food from the kitchen. We would build a big bonfire and sing and party for hours. Each morning, as Sid made abusive remarks about our haggard appearance, we swore that "tonight we will go to bed early." Of course, we never did.

All in all, it was the best of times. It was rather like a momentary sidestep from the more pressing plans of education, careers, etc. – and yet it was a great social learning experience. We were up high in the mountains with glorious air and fabulous scenery, with natural endorphins flowing all the time. Lasting friendships were made, great loves sometimes developed, and some ended in subsequent marriages. A fabulous time. A fabulous place.



Hiking the North Circle

By Anthony Hoff (St. Mary Lodge 2004)

In the summer of 2004 it was my privilege to work as a cook in the production kitchen of Roscoe Black's Resort at Glacier in St. Mary, Montana. Any complaints about management and wages aside, the job gave me and about 200 others a great opportunity to explore the Park without having to fulfill the extended season requirements of Glacier, Inc.

Towards the beginning of August, the novelty of the fifteen-mile jaunt through the mountains had begun to wear out for many of the staff. Some responded by taking up more easily gratifying activities such as fly fishing or heavy drinking. A few of us, however, chose to venture deeper and higher into the park, pushing the limits of our time off to tread as many trails and scale as many peaks as our joints would tolerate.

It was after hearing stories of earlier generations of hotel employees conquering the old "North Circle" in a single day that I recognized the challenge that we would take on. The route runs from Swiftcurrent through the Ptarmigan Tunnel, into the Belly River valley, over the Stoney Indian Pass, through the Kootenai area to Goat Haunt, then back south to crawl up to Fifty Mountain and ultimately back over the Swiftcurrent Pass to return to the beginning. It totals over 60 miles. Unfortunately, when I tried pitching this route to my more adventurous friends, the response was usually something like "16 miles? That sounds like a lot," or "How many days?" or, bluntly, "You are an idiot." So it was a small group that eventually climbed into a borrowed truck at 2 am on our way to Swiftcurrent. Specifically, it was me and Karol "Charlie" Wolek, a Polish kitchen worker with a reputation for setting a blistering pace when leading hikes.

Our original route through Ptarmigan had been confounded by the presence

of two sow grizzlies and their respective offspring, so we chose to enter the loop through Poia Lake over Redgap Pass and to eliminate the side trip to Goat Haunt. We took off into the darkness at the trailhead, making plenty of noise but avoiding using our flashlights so that our eyes would adjust. A full moon provided just enough light for us to stumble along.

The best thing you could say about those first few hours was that we didn't get lost. But we were rewarded at Redgap pass by an amazing sunrise which illuminated the rock from which

We reached Stoney Indian tired and slightly behind schedule. Heat and hills had slowed our ascent and we hurried down the steep switchbacks on the other side to try to catch up. When we paused by a creek, Charlie revealed another problem that had been slowing him down. The heavy boots that had served him so well on shorter hikes were chafing under the strain of the last 35 miles and had caused some bloody blisters. At this point continuing was really our only option, so we slapped some duct tape on the wounds and kept going, a little slower.

A few of us, however, chose to venture deeper and higher into the park, pushing the limits of our time off to tread as many trails and scale as many peaks as our joints would tolerate.

it gets its name. We paused to eat a light breakfast and discovered that our fellow kitchen employees had written encouraging messages like "You're going to die!" on our sack lunches. Charlie led us down the pass towards Lake Elizabeth, running whenever we could. So far we were making good time.

We breezed by Lake Elizabeth and blazed our way up towards the Mowokwanis River. It was here that we had (surprisingly) our only bear encounter of the day. After nearly ten hours on the trail, the numbness of extended hiking through dense foliage had set in, and we grew careless about making noise, our eyes wandering towards our boots. We suddenly heard a rustling up the trail ahead of us and looked up to discover that the source had been a massive black furry shape hightailing it away from us. Although it shocked us, the bear avoided us and we continued unslowed, fingering the triggers of our bear spray somewhat nervously.

On our way up to Fifty Mountain we met some Swiftcurrent employees on an overnight trip and stopped to talk. They asked where we were going, and I told them Fifty Mountain. Before I could explain that this was part of a larger route, one of them commented "That's good, we just met a couple of idiots trying to hike 40 miles in one day. We were worried you might be trying something stupid like that." I mumbled something incoherent and we kept climbing. With this optimistic exchange in mind we ascended to the high meadows of Fifty Mountain just in time to encounter a thunderstorm. Although it was short and we were not struck by lightning, we began the Highline leg wet, tired, and demoralized.

We hit the wall along the Highline. Out of food and reduced to eating straight Powerade powder, we lagged and made far less progress than earlier. I nervously watched the sun sinking towards the far horizon, remembering that our last leg would be on the east

side of the mountains. The situation was looking grim as we passed above the Granite Park Chalet and plunged into the deepening darkness on the other side of Swiftcurrent Pass.

Once again forgoing flashlights, we sped ahead to get past the steeper descent before the light failed us entirely. Charlie had hiked this stretch before during the day, so he led us confidently through the dark. We stumbled along, somehow not losing the trail, and after what seemed like an eternity the faint lights of the Swiftcurrent Motor Lodge appeared in the distance. Late-night desk workers gave us odd looks as we staggered to the building. After 58 miles of trail, 2 miles of road separated us from our truck, and the prospects for hitchhiking looked grim as it was now after midnight. Charlie's feet were bleeding again, so he elected to wait there with our packs while I ran down the road.

Carrying nothing but the keys, a can of bear spray, and an intermittently functional headlamp, I cruised through



Anthony Hoff and Karol Wolek at daybreak on Redgap Pass, with Mount Merritt and Old Sun Glacier in the background (Anthony Hoff photo)

a thick fog. It was an incredibly surreal experience. A few cars passed, but aside from that I saw nothing but the ten feet of road ahead of me, hazily lit by the glow of the invisible moon. I finally slid into the driver's seat of the truck with just enough energy left to operate the clutch on the way back. Charlie was asleep on a bench outside the lodge and it was all we could do to stay awake on

the long drive back to St. Mary. When we awoke late the next day, our co-workers expressed amazement that we were still alive, with the exception of one. Mitko, a Bulgarian in the kitchen who had refused to believe such a hike was possible, greeted us with an unimpressed "60 miles? I thought you were going to do 65!"

A Siyeh Retrospective

By Mark Hufstetler (Lake McDonald Lodge 1978-83)

Back when I was a kid, my Dad would take a week off work each summer and the family would head out on vacation. In 1966, when I was 8 years old, we were living in central Idaho and Glacier was the chosen summer destination. I was always excited about those annual vacations, but something happened almost the instant we arrived in Glacier: I fell in love with the place.

I only remember a few specifics about that trip, but I know that we camped in my grandparents' house trailer, and that I convinced my Dad to take me on a ranger-led hike to Avalanche Lake, and that I bought a red felt pennant at Two Medicine, with a drawing of Mt. Sinopah on it. And I very much

remember the little, black-and-white Glacier brochure that the Park Service issued back then. The booklet included a photo of a horseback party working up the spectacular trail along the cliffs just north of Ptarmigan Tunnel, and the image transfixed me. I wanted to go there so very badly, but there was no way an eight-year-old kid with two out-of-shape parents would ever make it. I took the brochure home, though, and kept it in my desk, and looked at that photograph often.

With that sort of memory it was really no surprise that when it came time to look for a summer job twelve years later, my first thought was Glacier. It was a real thrill back in the spring of 1978 when I returned to my college dorm one afternoon to find a fat envelope

from Glacier Park, Incorporated in my mailbox, containing a slightly-quirky employment letter typed on an all-caps typewriter and bearing Ian B. Tippet's distinctive signature. For hundreds of young men and women each year, getting a letter like that marked the beginning of a Montana summer adventure that frequently progressed into a lifelong fondness for Glacier; it was the same for me, too, but was also a rekindling of a dormant infatuation that had been with me since I was a kid.

The summer at Lake McDonald Lodge was great, of course: I had countless adventures, made some amazing new friends, and I even thought I fell in love. I was pretty distraught when it all ended, but I left with a trove of wonderful memories and the certainty that I

would return ... and the knowledge that now Glacier would remain a part of my life forever. Those memories drew me back to Lake McDonald summer jobs the next year, and the next -- a total of six seasons in all. After my last GPI summer I moved to Montana full-time, and later got to spend two long seasons as a Park Service employee in Glacier. Eight memorable summers in the park, some better than others, but each one treasured.

At the end of each of those years I wondered if my physical connection to the park would somehow end, but it never did. Even after I finally stopped working at Glacier I kept returning as a visitor, often two or three times a summer. At first the visits were pure nostalgia,

I was thinking about all this last July, as my friend Joel and I were starting a trip over Siyeh Pass, among my favorite of Glacier's shorter trails. I first did Siyeh back in August 1978, with a couple of friends named Danny and Bill. Befitting the 20-year-old physique I had back then, our day included sidetrips to Sexton Glacier as well as the top of Piegan Pass, probably accomplished with an effortlessness that would appall me today. I had that cheap red daypack that I'd bought at the lodge's campstore, and an employee sack lunch that was probably smashed flat by the time it was ready to be eaten. And I'm sure we had to hitchhike all the way back to the hotel after it was all done.

nally-dull connector trail from Preston to Jackson Glacier overlook, just so I could ink it in on my trail map; and a failed attempt to climb Mt. Siyeh, abandoned at a pitifully-low elevation probably in favor of a million-calorie lunch at Johnson's Cafe.

The experiences of recent years have added still more depth to my memories of Siyeh. I hiked the trail early in the summer of 2002 with another friend named Dan; we were among the first over the pass that year, and nearly the entire descent from Siyeh to Baring Basin was covered in a steep and pristine snowfield. We skied down the thing on our hiking boots, with a feeling of euphoria that would be hard to match anywhere. And this summer with Joel

For hundreds of young men and women each year, getting a letter like that marked the beginning of a Montana summer adventure that frequently progressed into a lifelong fondness for Glacier;

akin to looking at empty photographs, and they just left me with a sadness for times past. Eventually, though, my continued trips to Glacier started generating fond memories of their own, and I began valuing my continued relationship with the park almost as much as those early encounters of my youth. Each trip -- with old friends, new ones, or alone -- added another layer of experience and intimacy to my long-standing relationship with the park.

Today, it seems that almost every spot in Glacier is associated with a memory for me ... and often a succession of memories, built up over the years. It's a remarkably cool thing, and something that makes me more eager than ever to keep returning to Glacier and keep being involved in the park.

I revisited the western end of that trail the following year, as part of a traverse of Piegan Pass with Alan, my long-time hiking buddy. We did Piegan backwards, going up the more grueling north side of the pass after spending a restless and nervous night surreptitiously camped in a red bus sitting in the Many Glacier parking lot. To this day, Alan still takes glee in reminding me of the terrifying moment on the pass when I lost my footing on a steep snowfield and nearly slid into oblivion.

Oh, and there was the Siyeh trip in 1981 with Joe, my intrepid fellow bellman. He took a photo of me atop the pass that is still one of my favorites today. I remember some shorter trips, too -- visits to Preston Park to see the wildflowers; a trudge along the termi-

we met some *really* cute fellow hikers, amazingly got a cell phone call on the very top of the pass ... and we saw some of the very first smoke from the Red Eagle forest fire churning into the bright cloudless skies to the south.

No matter who I'm with, the next time I do Siyeh all of these memories -- and more -- will come back to me, and similar recollections will surface as I revisit other hikes and drives and favorite places. It's reason enough for me to keep returning to Glacier again and again, and it's a continual reminder of how special the place is, and how it's become such a part of my life.

GLACIER BULLETIN BOARD

The Inside Trail *welcomes not only articles, but also brief letters and anecdotes. Here are a few which were sent to us recently.*

More Football Memories

Too bad those Glacier Park Lodge v. Many Glacier football games (Spring 2006 issue) didn't start a couple of years earlier. Because we had the grass at GPL there were always pick-up games. The more serious

games were always behind the lodge – slightly away from the pool.

Somehow in '62 and '63 I ended up as a quarterback although I was not all that accurate a passer. It didn't matter, however, because we had an outstanding end from Washington State. In my dotage his last name is gone, but his first name was Dave. He gained fame in college ball by catching a pass behind his back, with one hand, and running it in for a

touchdown. As long as you heaved a pass anywhere near Dave, he had it and was gone. *John Dobbertin, Jr. (Glacier Park Lodge 1962-63)*

Missing Person Inquiry

Does anyone have information concerning Jane Gelston Buck? She worked at Glacier Park Lodge in the early 1960s. Her brother Ken drowned in one of the waterfalls in the 1950s. Any information would be greatly appreciated! *Joan Price Garcia (Glacier Park Lodge 1962-65, 76-77)*

GPF Fundraiser

Billie Lott, the wife of former gearjammer and GPF director Leroy Lott, is generously donating prints of her watercolor painting of St. Mary Lake to raise funds for the Glacier Park Foundation. The prints are available for a donation of \$100 (tax deductible to the extent permitted by law). They can be ordered by mail from GPF (Glacier Park Foundation, Box 15641, Minneapolis, MN 55415).

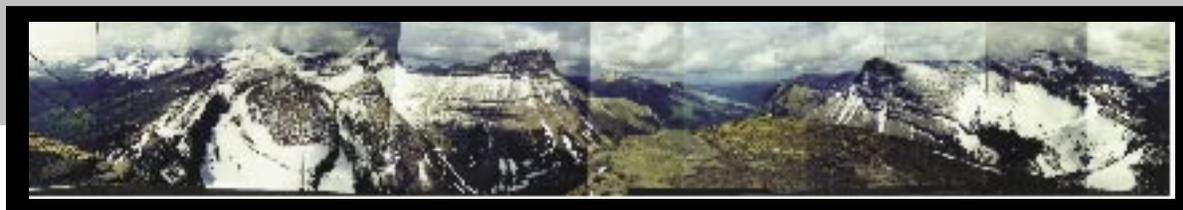


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All friends of Glacier Park are invited to join the Glacier Park Foundation. Membership includes a subscription to The Inside Trail and the right to vote for directors. Please download a membership form from our Web Site (www.glacierparkfoundation.org) or send your name, address, phone number, and park experience to Glacier Park Foundation, Box 15641, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

An annual membership in the Foundation costs \$10. A "Friend of the Park" membership costs \$25 annually, cumulating to a Lifetime membership in five installments. A Lifetime membership paid in one installment costs \$100.

The Glacier Park Foundation is a § 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



(Panorama by Christine Baker)