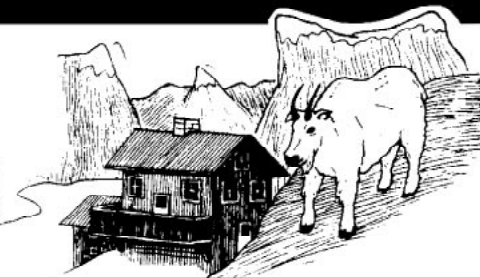


THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation ■ Spring 2004 ■ Volume XVIII, No. 2

Glacier Tales: An Anthology



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- **TABASCO**
Sauce:
... A Story

The lobbies for the great lodges combined back country spender with Swiss charm and Native American art. This photo shows the Glacier Park Lodge lobby prior to renovations.

The renovations of the 1950's modernized, increased the economic potential of the grand lodges, increased their economic potentials and focused the themes of each lodge to give each a clearer theme. (Hileman photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection.)

Bulletin Board

The Inside Trail *welcomes not only articles but also brief letters and anecdotes on Glacier. Here are some which were sent to us recently.*

A Brush With Death on Grinnell Point

I was quite interested in the memorial to Dave Paulus (Winter 2004 issue), whom I remember well. The story "A Brush With Death on Mt. Allen" reminded me of my own closest encounter with death in Glacier Park. It was in that same summer of 1970.

One Sunday on my day off, I hiked with one of my roommates, John Burkitt, up Grinnell Point. We took the normal trail up the back spine, but decided to take a "short cut" down the east face coming back down since it was getting late. At one point we had to inch our way, belly against the rock, across a rock face that was quite steep. Although I had footholds in most places, I felt myself slipping off. I had to lie totally against the rock and only the friction of my clothes against the rock kept me from falling off. Eventually, I was able to grope my way to another foothold.

I came away from that experience recognizing that when one continually engages in practices that involve danger, one's judgment clouds and one doesn't always recognize when he has crossed the line to attempt something he should not do. Needless to say, I gained a healthy respect for the fragility of life that afternoon.

John Moffat (Many Glacier 1970)

"Jeeryammers" at Two Medicine

I worked as a maid and kitchen assistant at Two Medicine Chalet during the Depression. Money was scarce, and we were glad to have a summer job. In our spare time, we hiked to Trick Falls and drove the park roads in a "flivver" with rumble seats. We had a resident cowboy named Buster who took the dudes out to ride on a string of horses (mostly pretty old). He knew a lot of western songs, and would sing them at night, indoors at the fire.

The heavy labor at the chalet was done by a man named Willard Bye. Willard was homeless during the wintertime, which he spent in Minneapolis. Each

summer, he would return to Two Medicine as gardener and handyman. Willard had a heavy Norwegian brogue, and referred to the red-bus drivers as "jeeryammers."
Muriel Nelson (Two Medicine 1937-38)

Bagpipes

*How faint and far from cliff and spar
The horns of elfland faintly blowing –*

That's what it seemed like, but this was not Tennyson's romantic England, this was the Many Glacier Hotel and it sounded like – bagpipes? People were rushing out to the balcony, easing out to the boat dock, so I knew I was not imagining this fantasy.

Then I saw him, across the lake, standing on the shore, all alone, serenading ... himself? The mountains? The evening's first star? As the alpenglow faded and the shadows deepened he continued to hold us all spellbound. The pipes were wailing lovely, lonely tunes. As "Amazing Grace" faded away, he too faded back into the pines. Who was he, where did he come from, and what inspired this magical concert to the night? I don't know, but it was one of the most beautiful moments of my life.

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.

The Adventures of Harlan Berntson

by Tessie Bundick (*Many Glacier 1972-82*)

In December of 1956, Harlan Berntson, a man with many years experience being a carpenter foreman, was working for Knutson Construction Co. of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Knutson Hotel Co. – a branch of the parent organization – had received a management contract to renovate the

Renovating Glacier's Lodges: 1957 - 1959

heating system at Lake McDonald needed to be replaced and a bar was required. A vestibule was decided on for the Prince of Wales and the basement St. Moritz Room at Many Glacier needed work. Sheetrocking, painting, and much else were the order of the day if a buyer was to be found.

Glacier Park Hotel Co. What a sight! Harlan never had seen mountains before, and these were mantled in snow.

Harlan's wife arrived soon afterward. Their accommodations were a large house on the Glacier Park Lodge golf course. Harlan was to be paid \$3.50 an hour with a guaranteed 48-hour week plus room and board.

Renovating Glacier Park Lodge

Under the supervision of Roy McLean, Harlan and the crew started work on February 1. They installed walk-in coolers and freezers in the kitchen, because theretofore ice had been used to refrigerate. Harlan used plans that had been drawn up by Newton

It seemed that the tourist of the 1950's wanted modern conveniences like private bathrooms, which were rare at these lodges.

hotels of Glacier Park (East Glacier Park Lodge, Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, and the Prince of Wales) starting in early 1957.

The hotels were not in very good shape at the time and the Great Northern Railway Co. needed to sell them because they were merging with the Northern Pacific Railroad Co. According to the terms of the merger, the Federal government insisted that they divest themselves of all unprofitable subsidiaries except raw land. The Great Northern had built the hotels in the early part of the 20th century and had been running them since. But no one would buy them the way they were and the Great Northern had to get busy – and in a hurry.

Many features of the hotels were outdated. Although the buildings were located in stunning Glacier Park, the best guest capacity they could achieve was a paltry fifty per cent. It seemed that the tourist of the 1950's wanted modern conveniences like private bathrooms, which were rare at these lodges. The electrical systems were in poor shape, the kitchens were ancient, and the gift shops were small. The

Harlan agreed to work as foreman on this project under Roy McLean, the supervisor. He came out on the train at the end of January and was met by Cy Stevenson, the chief engineer of the



Prior to renovation during the 50's, the Gift Shop and coffee shop at Glacier Park Lodge was quite small. (Photo courtesy of the James J. Hill Reference Library, Louis Hill papers.)

The Adventures of Harlan Berntson continued

Griffith, a private architect from Minneapolis hired by the Knutson Co.

Around March, Mr. McLean went to Many Glacier and left Harlan in charge at East Glacier. A coffee shop was added that summer in the lobby and the gift shop was expanded to two and one half times its original size. There were problems with having the store fixtures shipped in, so it was agreed that the Great Northern would set up a

chandise. This proved to be a hit with the hotel guests and a large sales volume ensued.

As soon as the lodge closed after Labor Day, Harlan and his union crew went into the annex to change all the connecting bathrooms into singles in the 111 guest rooms. Harlan had advertised for his crew and drew many of them from Kalispell. They gutted everything that needed to be torn out,

pots on the hotel's third floor. These were used in the early days when guests did not want to leave their rooms and stumble down the hall to the communal bathrooms, especially in the main part of the lodge where this activity was common amongst the guest rooms. So all in all, throughout the hotel, paying customers at Glacier Park Lodge all had private bathrooms in their accommodations after 1957.

So all in all, throughout the hotel, paying customers at East Glacier Park Lodge all had private bathrooms in their accommodations after 1957.

cabinet shop in the annex basement. Some very talented workmen were employed, including a glass cutter and polisher from Kalispell. The glass walls used in the lobby were cut right on site.

An electrical supervisor was hired to bring the outdated wiring system up to par.

The Great Northern Co. owned its own transforming facility. They bought power at 13,600 volts and brought it down to 440 volts in three phases. But now, with the expansion, the capacity needed to be tripled and heavier wiring was required.

Olaf, the painting foreman on the job, was top-notch. He had apprenticed for seven years in Denmark and his skills were excellent.

So work continued through the summer with guests in the hotel. Harlan says they did not seem to mind because the lodge seemed to be getting so much nicer. A new gift shop supervisor, Robert Ogren, from Dayton and Co. in the Twin Cities was brought in. He got rid of a lot of the junky tourist items and installed a better quality of mer-

cleaned up the mess and started to reconstruct. Thirty plumbers had been subcontracted, all housed at the Lodge. Supplies came in from Kalispell and Columbia Falls. All the showers, bathroom fixtures, and other plumbing supplies arrived by train from Spokane wholesale houses. Electrical supplies were also sent by rail from Spokane.

Many of the toilets were the old chain pulls and modern ones were installed. Harlan tells of finding old chamber

The Berntsons initially had been told that Harlan would only work in Glacier until June 1. But the work ran on for month after month, and they didn't go home until mid-December. By then, almost everything was finished at East Glacier except some painting in the annex. Work eventually had to be suspended because of the cold and was resumed in the spring.

Renovating the Prince of Wales

Roy McLean decided not to return to Glacier in 1958. He recommended Harlan as his successor. Martin Thiede, the Knutson Company's manager, offered Harlan the lead position in the ongoing renovation process. Harlan accepted. He was told to pick up the plans, get on the train and make his



Prior to the renovation, light fixtures with Native American pictographs hung in the Prince of Wales lobby (Hileman photo from the Ray Djuff collection.)

way to the Prince of Wales Hotel in Canada. At the Prince, the gift shop needed to be tripled in size and a new vestibule was to be constructed, as was a new front desk, among other things.

At East Glacier Park, Harlan was to pick up Mr. Thiede's 1957 Buick Estate wagon and drive to Canada. He arrived in Waterton and stayed with the chief engineer at the Prince, sleeping on his Chesterfield (sofa). They decided to set up a big heater in the hotel, bring up water and have meals at the house of one of the restaurant men in town. Harlan was at the Prince for March, April, part of May, and back and forth throughout the summer. A chance acquaintance turned out to be the AAA person in Lethbridge – he told Harlan to contact him if he needed subcontractors or help.

Subsequently, the AAA man informed Harlan that the province of Alberta had just passed a law to allow hotels to have liquor licenses. Previously, only clubs and places like the VFW and Elks could obtain the precious paper. Harlan contacted Mr. Thiede and then



The original staircase from the Prince of Wales Hotel renovated about 1959 to create the Windsor Lounge (Photo courtesy of Glacier National Park.)

The license turned out to be a mixed blessing, however, because the hotel had to have *much* more done to it to meet new codes required in establishments that were granted the privilege. For example, the electrical service had to be redone, more fire escapes had to be built and smoke doors also had to be added. The electrical renovation alone was to cost \$50,000 – quite a lot in 1958. So the Great Northern had its head electrical engineer, its head

the money for the job. They knew full well that a liquor license would greatly increase the hotel's revenue and make the expense most worthwhile.

So Harlan began work. The electrical supervisor from the U.S. came up once in awhile to oversee progress. The Canadian inspectors were extremely strict, much more so than the U.S. agents. Once, when an electrical inspector was having lunch with Harlan, he (Harlan) tried to pick up the check but the man refused stating that he could lose his job if he allowed it. When he came for a final look-over, he had to see that not one cover was missing and that everything was done strictly according to code. He was checked on himself. But Harlan did such fine work that the Prince of Wales Hotel passed even by these very tough standards.

The Canadian fire inspector was also very particular. Once he came into the Prince and found a smoke door propped open. He informed Harlan, the hotel manager, and the executive housekeeper that if he came again and found such a situation, he would evacuate the premises and put a lock and chain on the front door! From then on, no one dared to prop open any smoke doors.

In the Prince's lobby hung some "western looking" parchment type light fixtures with Native American pictographs painted on them. The Great Northern architect, Newton Griffith, felt that they did not fit the British motif of the hotel and had them sent to Lake McDonald Lodge where they have been proudly displayed and enjoyed for many years.

handed the phone over to the AAA agent who advised him to send a letter to the capital to put in a request for a license *quickly* as only a *few* were being issued. Thiede was so speedy that the Prince was the first facility in southern Alberta to acquire the sought-after document.

electrical supervisor, and its western engineer come to the Park to see if the expense was justified. They were driven to Canada in a limo and the hotel was inspected (it was very cold!). Harlan took them all up to the Elks Club in Lethbridge where such a good time was enjoyed that they decided to give him

The Adventures of Harlan Berntson continued

The Great Northern also decided to add a vestibule to the front of the building – mainly for weather reasons. The architect Newton Griffith drew plans for this addition, which showed a

every spring and re-bulbed. When a switch was thrown, the hoist raised the fixture to a given height, where a safety stop locked it into place. The lights in the dining room were also redone.

electric heaters in the lobby between the columns. The National Park Service owned Lake McDonald and leased it to the Great Northern, so Park Service personnel did the inspections. When they saw these rather homely, factory gray devices in that historical place, they decided they just did not fit. So Harlan called in Olaf, the Danish painting foreman, and asked if he could help. When Harlan returned to the lodge three weeks later, Olaf had wood-grained the heaters in such a natural way that the Park Service was delighted and so was everyone else.

Lake McDonald Lodge had had a very rustic electrical system run by a water wheel. This system had generated direct (not alternating) current for light bulbs of no more than 50 watts.

new interior vestibule, a new gift shop and new front desk. Harlan realized that this work would have to be a close match to the existing edifice. Fortunately, he decided to go to the Lethbridge Sash and Door Company with the plans. The proprietor looked at what Harlan presented, disappeared into the back room and inspected some of *his* old plans. He returned and stated that his business had done all the millwork for the hotel in 1927. So he took the job and did beautiful work again some thirty years later!

There was also some interior decoration work that was completed at this time. In the Prince's lobby hung some "western looking" parchment type light fixtures with Native American pictographs painted on them. The Great Northern architect, Newton Griffith, felt that they did not fit the British motif of the hotel and had them sent to Lake McDonald Lodge where they have been proudly displayed and enjoyed for many years.

A huge light fixture for the lobby was purchased in St. Louis Park, Minnesota – special order. It consisted of steel rings with coach lanterns. An electric hoist had to be engineered up in the tower with a hole in the tower floor so that the heavy fixture could be lowered

Renovating Lake McDonald Lodge

At Lake McDonald Lodge, Harlan and his wife were put up in the caretaker's cabin. She cooked for thirty men on the crew that winter ('58-'59). Hy Olson, the Glacier Park Company's purchasing agent, came to discuss the food situation. Meat had to be purchased from suppliers in Kalispell. Hy cautioned that the word "steak" must not appear on invoices, but that "loins" and "rounds" could be purchased. Butch Rink, the labor supervisor, was a butcher by trade, and with his assistance the crew ate very well.

Lake McDonald Lodge had had a *very* rustic electrical system run by a water wheel. This system had generated direct (not alternating) current for light bulbs of no more than 50 watts. Roy McLean and his crew redid the electrical work in 1957, replacing the ancient "knob-and-tube" system with new wiring. When the power line came in, there was electricity everywhere – heat in the hotel and cabins and dormitories.

Harlan tore out the old wood furnaces that were ducted (gravity type, with no fan arrangements) in the basement — one on each side. The electrical supervisor decided to put the new

Other tasks at Lake McDonald included sheetrocking and painting the rooms, modernizing the kitchen with new electrical appliances, installing bathrooms in the guest rooms, and installing new public restrooms in the lobby. The gift shop was enlarged and a small bar was installed near the dining room. The Prince of Wales's light fixtures that had been hung at Lake McDonald in 1958 fit beautifully in the lobby and added to the special atmosphere in that charming space.

To complete the modernization of the hotels, new furniture was purchased for Lake McDonald Lodge as well as for East Glacier Park Lodge and Many Glacier Hotel. This included lobby pieces as well as beds, mattresses, and box springs.

Renovating Many Glacier Hotel

Harlan next went to Many Glacier Hotel to work on it, although he had crews at Lake McDonald and the Prince of Wales. He liked being at Many because it was centrally located between the other two sites and he could travel amongst them.

The kitchen at Many Glacier was as old fashioned as the ones at the other hotels. Again the refrigeration was



The spiral staircase in the lobby of Many Glacier Hotel. It was removed to make room for a greatly expanded gift shop (Photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection.)

accomplished with ice and the stoves were ancient Navy oil burners. Mr. Hy Olson, the purchasing agent for the Glacier Park Hotel Co., advertised the old equipment and sold much of it to the local Hutterites for a very reasonable price. So a new electrical kitchen was installed complete with a modern, heavy-duty dishwasher made by the Hobart Co.

Before Harlan started working at the hotel, the spiral staircase in the lobby was taken out and Mr. McLean had expanded the gift shop. Harlan was not involved in that procedure but was assigned to one of the toughest jobs at Many – removing support columns in the basement. There simply were too many of them in the downstairs recreational area. It was too difficult to put chairs in the space for meetings or conventions, and dances were awkward.

So Harlan and his crew jacked up the lobby floor and cut down the selected columns. A tripod with a hoist was set up in the hotel lobby and chains were dropped through holes that had been cut in the floor. The chains were

attached to heavy steel beams that were lifted up to the ceiling of the basement St. Moritz Room to reinforce the floor above it. While they were pulling the beams up, Harlan had everyone stand as far away as possible so that if a chain

crew. Ray could even predict the weather. In March, he told Harlan that a big blizzard would occur in 24 hours because the sheep had come down from the mountains. Sure enough, the storm happened and it was as wild as foretold

Harlan was not involved in that procedure but was assigned to one of the toughest jobs at Many – removing support columns in the basement.

broke, no one would get hurt. After the lengths of steel were snugly put in place, wooden coverings were fastened over them and cleverly carved by an artisan with an adz to fit in with the “rustic” décor. They can be seen and enjoyed to this day. The holes in the lobby floor were then filled in and no one was the wiser.

Many Glacier Hotel had a steam boiler which was old and noisy but was not replaced. New bathrooms were built

by Ray. Harlan kept in touch with Ray and he and his wife even went to visit him at his home in Los Angeles.

Harlan also remembered Mrs. Rhody – the chief cook at Many Glacier. She had the best food costs in the park and ran a very tight ship. An extra piece of fruit carelessly slipped into a dessert bowl would be spied by her eagle eye and the salad girl would be told, in no uncertain terms, to remove it.

Continued on page 16.

Jammer Tales

Colorful Memories of Red Bus Drivers from 1947 - 2003

By Tammy Hansan (Many Glacier Hotel 1981; Glacier Park Lodge 1982-83)

This collection of stories was assembled during the Jammer Reunion and Rededication of the Red Buses, June 6-8, 2002. The event was held at Glacier Park Lodge. The subsequent parties and gatherings moved to Lake McDonald Lodge due to a blizzard that dropped four feet of snow in a 48-hour period. The camaraderie of the jammers and the stories shared while the snow fell offer a glimpse into the illustrious history of jammers covering the years 1936-2001.

The jammers' thoughts were recorded and are retold here primarily as a collection of stories rather than actual transcriptions. Jammers were asked to share their names, years they drove in the park and the buses that got them over Logan Pass. They shared their most treasured experiences, memorable events, and favorite jokes. They related their thoughts on how Glacier National Park impacted their lives and recounted any other events they had in reflection of their experiences. This narrative is as true to their stories as possible. No factual information has been altered.

This project to record and retell the stories of the Jammers was the brainchild of my husband John Hansan, who worked in the park 1981-1983 as Transportation Agent and Transportation Director. John passed away on July 8, 2002 of melanoma, just one month after these histories were collected. This text is dedicated to John with all my love.

P.S. Special thanks to Steve Vogel (GPI 1977-1982) for his support with this project! And to my Columbus friend, Georgia Crosby, of Mindleaders, Inc. for

technical support.

Johnnie Ridgeway (1947): The Stow-away Snake

Johnnie Ridgeway was in Glacier Park in 1947 and drove Bus #86. Glacier Park has special significance in Johnnie's life because he met his wife at Lake McDonald. She was from Minnesota and worked as a waitress in the employees' mess hall. They dated all summer long and married the following April.

When Johnnie drove in 1947, most of the drivers were veterans. At age 21, he was one of the younger ones. "It was a very mature bunch of guys, a very fun bunch of guys — a very, very close fraternity." There were some real characters, such as Ding Dong Bell from Oklahoma. Five Hands Apistoki "was a little short Texan, couldn't see over the steering wheel and the girls called him Five Hands 'cause he couldn't keep his hands off them." A group of four Texans

could always be heard coming into Lake McDonald because they would

teach everyone on their buses to sing *The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You* as they drove down the driveway.

Johnnie's most memorable incident involved a snake. He was on a run from Prince of Wales to Many Glacier and had a man with a noisy child in the back seat. When they arrived at Many Glacier, Johnnie noticed that the child was crawling all around the back of the bus. He inquired about the child's behavior and discovered that the boy had lost his garter snake! Johnnie took his bus to the garage, put it up on the ramp and

washed it out as always. He figured that he had gotten rid of the garter snake.

The next morning Johnnie had a tour of "about eight fairly sizable ladies." The ladies were riding in the back seats with the tour leader in the front. It was a pleasant day and the top was rolled back. They traveled uneventfully up the east side of the Going-to-the Sun Highway. As the group was about two-thirds of the way down the west side, Johnnie looked down by his foot and the snake emerged from between the firewall and the floorboard! He saw it sneaking out and pressed his foot on its head hoping he could kill it. The snake's entire body came out while he was holding the head down with his foot. By this time, the tour leader saw it. Johnnie lifted up his foot and the snake went straight back under the seat. The women saw it, screamed, crawled up over the backs of the seats and leaned over the railing. Johnnie had "eight women with their tail ends sticking right up in the air over the top of the bus on the Going-to-the-Sun Highway." When he stopped, the five buses behind him stopped too, and the jammers all helped to find the snake.

Johnnie recalls being frustrated with the tourists and their lack of respect for the bears. The bears in the park had not

Johnnie's most memorable incident involved a snake.

realized that humans were dangerous and were often seen in the road destroying

cars. There were always bears cubs around Lake McDonald and the tourists would stop traffic and take their children out to see the bears. The jammers didn't like to stop around the bears because the bears would scratch the buses. Parents saw a photo opportunity and would send their children out to pet the cubs. The jammers tried to convince people to get their children away from the bears and the people would get angry with them.

Ino Belsaas was the transportation agent for many years at Lake McDonald. Ino was "very precise, kind of an old fuddy-

duddy.” As the buses would pull in, he would make sure they were spaced out. Ino had a chalkboard and his watch. As soon as the wheel of a bus stopped, he would jot down the time. Then he would open the door and give the same speech to the passengers about where to have lunch and where the restrooms were located. The jammers decided to have some fun with Ino one day. Johnnie recalls: “There were probably fifteen of us in a row. So, outside of Lake McDonald about three miles, we all stopped and came bumper to bumper and we came all into Lake McDonald one behind the other and turned about one hundred and fifty people loose at the same time. Poor Ino ‘bout had a stroke!”

Nathan Wilkinson (1998): A Grizzly Bear Tragedy

Nathan Wilkinson drove Bus #92 during the summer of 1998. He remembers arranging to stay at Lake McDonald so he could be closer to his future wife, Yvonne Davis, who worked in the kitchen there. They were married in 2000 at Lake McDonald Lodge.

The summer of 1998 started out on a dark note. One of the drivers was killed by a grizzly bear just as the summer began. Nathan recalls: “The basic story behind that was we had the weekend off

and he apparently went to go watch a hockey game at a bar near East Glacier.

The bar was closed so he decided to go for a hike. On Monday he never showed up for work and we didn’t — we had just met each the week before, and didn’t know each other’s personality, and we didn’t know if he had just decided to take off and [decide whether he would] be a jammer or not.

“At noon we had security check his room and all his stuff was there and about 4 or 5 we got kinda worried and a bunch of us jammer drivers jumped in my jeep and went looking for him. So we were looking for him and found his car at the

trail head at Scenic Point lookout — and at that point, before I thought maybe something was going on with his girlfriend or something — but then when I saw his car there I was getting kinda worried that something bad happened. We thought maybe he went hiking and broke his ankle or broke his leg, something like that. We got ahold of the park rangers and they gave us a can of bear spray and six of us went out to try to find him in case something happened and he was hurt. Two went back and four of us were looking for him.

“We didn’t think about it, but there were all these birds flying in this one area and we [commented] ‘Look at all those black birds.’ It didn’t dawn on us. We looked till about 8:30 and it started to get dark so we decided to turn back. When we got there his coat was hanging on the fence post right at the trailhead, so we came back and filled out a police report. And they ended up having a big search for him. They found him about two days later and he was over where the birds were hanging out. A grizzly bear and two two-year-old cubs had stalked him and killed him and gouged him.

“It was kinda bad ‘cause two groups of people heard him screaming and one group discounted it. The other group

looked for a little bit and they gave up and never reported it to the rangers. Someone

found his backpack and took his backpack and a week later they found out this guy got killed in Glacier Park. The bear that killed him was [called] Chocolate Legs and had a reputation - had dark brown legs and a blond body.”

Mike Laliberte (1984): “No Brakes!”

Mike Laliberte drove in 1984. He chose Bus #84. He thought that this bus had the smoothest clutch, and was the most comfortable. Mike’s only complaint was that the hand brake was really difficult to find consistently. But he thought it was a great bus.

The jammer party that year was held near Lake MacDonald in an open space where everyone could be loud and have a bonfire and not bother anybody else. Awards had been created highlighting various personality traits. Mike earned the Gotta Get Over the Pass Award. He remembers several obstacles he encountered in his efforts to make it successfully over the pass. Most notably, he shared the story of getting over the pass without brakes.

Mike deadheaded from East Glacier to Lake MacDonald to pick up a tour. He braked at the last stop sign before going into Lake MacDonald Lodge, but sailed clean through the stop sign! He thought that he would be OK, since he was going

He remembers several obstacles he encountered in his efforts to make it successfully over the pass.

up the steepest part of the road. And he could slow the bus — just not stop it. (The mechanics were not the friendliest bunch that year. Mike had been severely scolded by them early in the season for refusing to drive with a flat tire. He chose not to contact them with a simple issue like having no brakes.)

Mike started the tour from Lake MacDonald. Everything went well on the way up to Logan Pass. On the way down, Mike pumped the brakes to keep just enough pressure in them to keep the bus from running away. He also kept the bus in “whatever gear it was, second or third.” Mike gave this account of his memorable ride: “I was able to contain the bus pretty well. The road was pretty smooth and traffic wasn’t bad and I was able to hold it at the proper speed. But I still couldn’t stop. So as we were going down, [the brakes] were fading worse and worse.

“So I’m stomping on the brake. And it’s hitting the floor with a loud thump. The front seat was still a bench seat and I had

Jammer Tales continued

a full bus so I had somebody sitting up front with me. There's this lady sitting there and she'd look at my feet and look at me and her eyes were as big as saucers. We pulled into Jackson Glacier turnout and I said 'Look off to the right and see Jackson Glacier.' RRRRRRRR. I pulled back the emergency brake and it made this loud howl. RRRRRRRR [The bus] stopped. The rest of the trip was OK because you really don't have to make some stops until you get to the lodge." [Editor's Note: Readers new to Glacier will be reassured to know that the old red buses were given new brakes, chassis, engines, and transmissions during their renovation by Ford Motor Company in 2002.]

Another obstacle in Mike's endeavors to get over the pass without incident was the Rocky Mountain Flu. This was the summer when the Many Glacier employee mess included a quarantine table. Mike caught the flu from a jammer at Lake MacDonald. Mike was on his way up the west side with a tour. As he approached the Weeping Wall, he was suddenly hit with nausea. He tried to dismiss it, but soon didn't even want to talk any longer. By the time they got to Logan Pass, he knew he was very ill. He allowed his tour extra time at the Pass so he could prepare himself for the trip down the east side.

The tour continued and Mike barely made two turns away from Logan Pass till he was felling very sick again. He fought the waves of nausea and picked up speed toward the Jackson Glacier turnout. He had barely stopped the bus before he jumped out and bolted into the woods. He felt better again after a few minutes and devised a plan to explain this to his tour. He grabbed a couple of leaves - a big fat leaf and a little leaf. He explained to the folks how the sunlight affects different foliation. His quick thinking turned the alarming situation into something positive.

By the time they arrived at Many Glacier, however, everyone was aware of Mike's illness. They stopped asking questions when they saw his pallid complexion. He dropped off his folks and went straight up to the jammer dorm. He was able to talk another jammer into putting the bus away, folding the blankets, and closing the top. Mike remembers this as one of the meanest illnesses he has ever had!

Duane Brassette (2001-2003): A Smoker Kicks the Habit

Duane Brassette was one of the faithful jammers who "carried the torch for the reds" and drove a white van during the summer of 2001, while the old fleet was in Detroit being restored. He tells a story of a couple of hikers he picked up on the shuttle from Lake McDonald. He

Duane Brassette . . . tells a story of a couple of hikers he picked up on the shuttle from Lake McDonald.

enjoyed driving the shuttle because commentary was not necessary. "You just go for a ride. You don't have to worry about a tip 'cuz they're not probably gonna give you a tip."

The hikers he drove this particular day were high school buddies and in their senior years at different colleges. They had never been to Glacier National Park and this was a trip they had planned since boyhood. As they rode along towards Logan Pass, they pointed out the mountains and knew right where they were. They planned a three day backcountry experience and had maps and huge backpacks.

The shuttle had specific stops to wait for hikers. At the first stop, one of Duane's passengers got out and lit a cigarette. The friend who stayed in the bus commented about his buddy's continued need to smoke. Along the way, one of them commented, "You know, somebody said

that if you don't believe in God, just go to Glacier and you'll find God." At the next stop they talked again and Duane realized how much he would have liked to go hiking with these guys. When they arrived at Logan Pass and the hikers were set to go, he approached the one who smoked and said, "I noticed you were smoking back there." The hiker acknowledged that he smoked and stated that he knew he should quit.

Duane responded, "You know, I never smoked, but I always have heard that the first 3 days are the worst; the hardest to quit. Why don't you just give me all your cigarettes, I'll put them in a bearproof container and Thursday when you get back you'll be a nonsmoker." The hiker looked at Duane and agreed. He pulled a total of five packs of cigarettes from his pockets and pack. Duane crushed them all and put them in a bearproof container. The hiker hugged him and stated, "I'll never forget this moment for as long as I live," and off they went.

Tommy Raye (1969-71): A Sightless Sightseer

Tommy Raye worked in the park from 1969-1971. He drove Buses #98, #99, and #101 and was a Transportation Agent in 1971. Tommy describes a particularly memorable encounter. It was late one evening, and he was driving a small tour that was running late. He took two people, a blind lady and her companion, from Waterton down to Many

They all eventually made it over the pass and enjoyed the adventure.

Glacier. He thought it was unique that a blind lady was on a sightseeing tour. He was as pleasant as possible and explained what they were seeing, giving the most vivid verbal descriptions that he could.

Tommy told another story of hiking in the park. He and a friend were hiking

Gunsight Pass when they met a girl on the trail. She joined them and, as they neared the pass, she grew tired. They were close to the pass and she couldn't have weighed more than 95 or 100 pounds, so Tommy encouraged her to jump on his back. She took him up on the offer. About one hundred steps later, he realized that he wasn't going to make it. The extra weight was more than he anticipated. They all eventually made it over the pass and enjoyed the adventure.

Bill Schade (1961-62): Jammer Jokes

Bill Schade drove Buses #94 and #110 in 1961 and 1962. He shared his favorite "jammer jokes" and a very personal memory of Glacier National Park.

As Bill drove his tour past St. Mary Lake and he pointed out the beautiful island, he would share its name with the people: Paradise Island. Then he would comment: "The reason it was named Paradise Island is that no woman has set foot on it." The men would laugh and the women would just groan.

"Ladies and gentlemen, if you're nervous about driving on the road here, maybe you ought to do what I do — just close your eyes."

He recalls driving on the Going-To-the-Sun Highway with tourists who were very nervous as Bill slowly maneuvered around the curves. Bill would calm his passengers by saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, if you're nervous about driving on the road here, maybe you ought to do what I do — just close your eyes. That's what I do." More groans.

Bill shared an exceptional memory of Glacier that happened not while he was driving, but many years later. He encouraged his children to work in the park and his daughter met her husband while working at Many Glacier Hotel. The wedding was planned for Glacier Park, since the families were in Minnesota and

California. The boat concessionaire permitted the use of the *DeSmet*. The families were also permitted to use Bus #94 (which was the one that Bill drove in 1961). There wasn't a wave on the lake nor a cloud in the sky as they were married on Lake McDonald. It was just a perfect day!

Tammy Hansan (1981-83): Editor's Postscript

Glacier Park has touched many lives in ways that cannot be described. What can be shared are the many stories, the jokes and the laughter of employees who appear to have all worked together even though their actual hire dates may be decades apart. As past employees of the concessionaire, we all have cherished memories that are beyond words. Experiences that have nothing to do with the job but with the park itself - the vistas, the scents, the quietness of a place not quite like any other place on Earth. We all share these intrinsic ideals and seem to know that every other employee has had an experience similar to the one

we remember just because he or she spent a summer in Glacier Park.

Some people refer to Glacier Park as their cathedral. For others, it is that place of solitude and meditation. For me, the park is a deeply spiritual place, a place that is so very difficult to describe to friends who have never seen it or anything like it.

During my summers in Glacier Park (1981-1983), I didn't realize just how wonderful the place was. It wasn't until I left and didn't return the next year that the impact of Glacier was evident in my life. Life just isn't the same in the concrete jungle of Columbus, Ohio. My husband and I returned many years later, in 1997, to share the park with our children, then again for the jammer reunion in June, 2002. My children and I returned once more in August of 2002 to re-center our lives after the death of my husband and their father. Now, at this time in my life, the power of Glacier Park has taken hold and I will be back for as many summers as I am able.



For better than three quarters of a century generations of bright red buses have graced the roadways of Glacier and the drivers have collected stories of antics and adventures. (Photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff Collection.)

Hot-Wiring a Coach Horse . . .

And Other Wrangler Tales

by Robert Wellman (owner of the Park Saddle Horse Company, 1946-1970)

I drove the Tally Ho stagecoach at Many Glacier for two years. It would seat nine passengers comfortably and a few more if there were children. I had trained four pinto horses to pull it. I would pick up the passengers at the hotel and go up around the camp store and campground. This would give people about forty-five minute ride.

say loudly, "Come on, Prince!" when I did it. It wasn't long till all I had to say was, "Come on, Prince!" and he would move right out.

Blackie Dillon, the famous wrangler (whom I wrote about in the previous issue of *The Inside Trail*), was more fun than anyone. He would be visiting in the bar, and all the females would hang around and try to get his attention. I remember when two very attractive

the edge of the lake. The pack with their clothes in it came open and their things flew into the water. Bras, panties, socks, and all the things that young ladies take with them were floating around. Blackie got a rake and began to pull them out. The ladies wrung them out, laughing and having a good time. They decided to go back to the hotel instead of going on a pack trip. I always wondered how Blackie made that horse buck.

The pair that were in front were a bit smaller than the two in back. Of the two in back, one was lazy and I had trouble making him keep his side of the eveners up so that he was pulling anything at all.

I have never particularly liked spotted horses, as I have never had one that was especially good, but the colors stand out and people notice them. The pair that were in front were a bit smaller than the two in back. Of the two in back, one was lazy and I had trouble making him keep his side of the eveners up so that he was pulling anything at all. I couldn't carry any kind of a whip or the people would think I was cruel.

I thought about it for quite awhile, and then decided on a plan. I got an electric fence charger and a small battery and put them on the floor by my feet. Then I ran a wire up through his harness and bared about four inches of it and wrapped it around the crouper, which goes under the horse's tail. I rigged a deal where I could operate a connector with my toe that would make the charger go on. I would just let it shock him once, and

young ladies met him at the bar and talked him into taking them on a pack trip. Now Blackie was more comfortable staying at the hotel. He would intentionally make a mess out of anything he didn't want to do so you wouldn't ask him to do it again. I made it a point to watch and see what was going to happen.

Blackie got all of the things that they were going to bring along packed up. They had brought along some refresh-

We always had seasonal rangers who we called "Posy Pickers." They knew a little bit about the flora and fauna for talking to the dudes. But they couldn't tell a black bear track from a grizzly track.

One time we were told not to take horses on the trail along Lake Josephine. I told all the guides who worked for me, and nobody was going on that trail. Then a seasonal ranger came and really chewed me out, saying that he had found fresh horse tracks in the forbidden area. After he got through, I went and looked. Then I asked Don Barnum, the District Ranger at St. Mary, to visit the site. He came and looked and we both had a good laugh. The "Posy Picker" didn't

I thought about it for quite awhile, and then decided on a plan.

ment and were passing it around liberally and having a good time. He got the packs on a horse, and then it went to bucking. They were right on

know the difference between horseshoe tracks and mule shoe tracks. The tracks at Lake Josephine were from mule shoes – and only the Park Service had mules!

Memories of Blackie Dillon

By J. Gordon Edwards (*National Park Service 1947; Author of "A Climber's Guide to Glacier National Park"*)

Blackie Dillon (the legendary wrangler, Spring 2003 issue) was a good friend of mine. We often shared the trail to Iceberg Lake. As he and his riders caught up with my hiking parties, we would pause by the trail, and he would pause, waiting for my comments. I often told the hikers how famous Blackie was, and that we would see him again at the lake. Then I would ask Blackie if the horses come back to the stable smelling like people. He would guffaw at that.

At Iceberg Lake I always took little packages of coffee, dumped them into a #10 can, and boiled it over a small fire. Blackie would walk over and ask, "Did you put the tobacco in yet?" I'd admit that I hadn't, and that I had run out. Then Blackie would pull out a

little leather pouch and open it up and sprinkle the contents over the boiling coffee. I'd thank him very much, then drop some eggshells in and stop the boiling by dipping the steel point of my ice axe into it. (I usually told the drinkers that what Blackie had added was just more coffee.) Fun times!

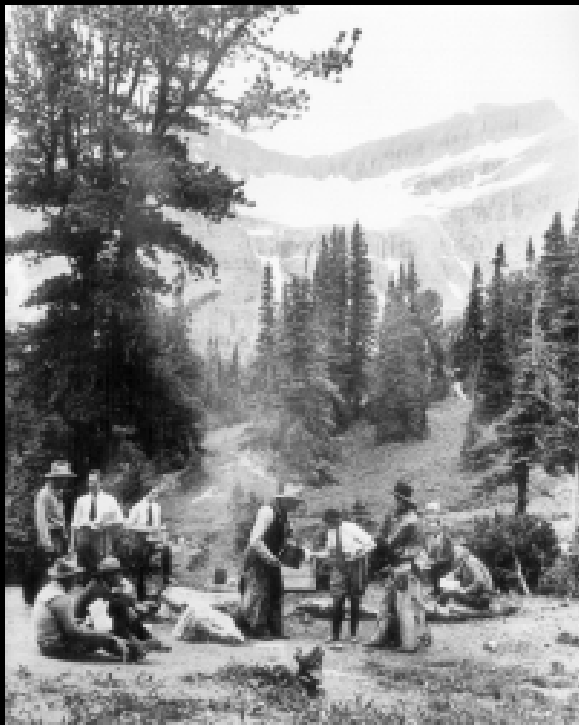
At Grinnell Glacier I once asked Blackie if he had ever *walked* up to that destination. As I recall, he laughed and said, "Hell, my feet don't fit no trails." Once, while we were at the glacier, a surprise storm blew over from the west and *really* rained. The outhouse was full and children were crying. I got a

picture of Blackie lying under a 5-foot-tall alpine fir in the rain. I often showed that slide at evening talks. Blackie would come in and watch until his picture came on the screen (and everyone laughed), and after laughing at it, Blackie would leave.

One night he was on the Many Glacier dance floor dancing with one of his "dudes." She asked, "Where did you get your costume?" He laughed and said, "Hell, lady; this is no costume – this is my *clothes!*"

I could go on forever about Blackie. After he stopped guiding riders, he

I once asked Blackie if he had ever walked up to that destination. As I recall, he laughed and said, "Hell, my feet don't fit no trails."



Blackie Dillon shows the splendor of Iceberg Lake to a group of 'dudes'. (Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society)

spent time driving the stagecoach from Many Glacier Hotel to the Swiftcurrent Coffee Shop and back. He would have coffee at the counter with me and discuss things. I recall him telling me who the "Josephine" was, after whom the lake and the old mine were named, and what eventually happened to her (she moved to Arizona or some other southern place). The last time he drove the stagecoach was the time he ran one of the big wheels over the fender of the boss's automobile, near the hotel where it was parked.

We heard later that Blackie was working at Knott's Berry Farm, so we drove down to see him. His beard was white, but otherwise he seemed unchanged. His job was holding up the stagecoach, which he did very well. The driver would hold his hands up and act scared, throw the "bag of gold" to Blackie, and then drive on. Blackie kept those bags in a wooden bucket until the end of the day, then gave them back to the stagecoach driver. It was great seeing him again.

Shooting the Rapids

On Swiftcurrent Creek

By Dick Schwab (Many Glacier 1947-52)

In the 1940s and 1950s the great vogue for commercial and amateur rubber rafting had not begun in earnest, but because Doug George came into possession of a leaky yellow raft, we launched into the sport with much enthusiasm and almost no knowledge of the perils involved. Swiftcurrent Creek was a lively challenge, with its many rapids and spiney snags of deadfalls along the way which could be lethal both to raft and rafters. But we knew nothing about that. We did not even wear life jackets.

Doug had only one paddle, and so we supplemented it with old, worn-out hotel brooms. Before a disastrous flood in the 1960s which changed its channel below Boulder Creek, Swiftcurrent Creek could be navigated (dangerously) in a rubber raft from Sherburne Dam clear down to Lower St. Mary Lake. Shooting the Swiftcurrent rapids was an exciting thing to do on a sunny afternoon off when the water was high. From the moment we piled into the raft and were swirled away in the white water it was pure excitement. We would be thrust by the water into crisis after crisis of rapids, whirlpools, sharp rocks, and treacherous spear-like snags.

What added a positive frenzy to the experience was the fact that the raft was constantly leaking air, and in the middle of each emergency someone had to be frenetically pumping in more. As the raft was going soft and limp and was filled with water it became even less controllable than when it was pretty much inflated. The almost constant need for pumping meant one

fewer pair of arms to help cope with the dangers into which we were constantly plunged.

On some of our runs we were in the icy, frothy water as often as we were in the raft, and rescue operations were continually necessary. Mercifully, no one drowned, but there was more than one close call. Once someone was washed overboard and swept into a very nasty snag formed by a tree that had fallen over into the water, I believe. He was folded over an underwater branch by the awesome force of the current. For awhile no efforts by the other rafters could extricate him, and it was only

relatively calm waters toward Lower St. Mary Lake someone said, "Look out! There's a spike sticking down from that trestle!" Before preventive action could be taken the raft was carried right into the rusty spike, which ripped a huge gash in the upper part of it, far too long to be mended by the old-fashioned tire patching outfit we had. That is when we sought the help of Earl the Barber, who emerged from his store-room-closet with a sail-maker's palm. But the stitching and patching was not as effective as we had hoped it would be, and thereafter it took almost continuous pumping to keep the raft afloat.

But the stitching and patching was not as effective as we had hoped it would be, and thereafter it took almost continuous pumping to keep the raft afloat.

barely possible to keep his head above the water so that he could breathe. I am not sure how the victim was finally pried free, but the experience did finally make us aware of a peril we had not thought seriously about. This kind of mishap may have happened more than once, since sometimes I have the image of a young man who was rescued, and at other times I have the impression it was a woman.

The raft never fully recovered from a very nasty freak accident. As a group of rafters were being carried forward on

When I have thought back on that episode I have wondered how it could possibly be that there once was a little railroad trestle across the creek. I have looked for remnants of it, although not very thoroughly, and have found no sign of it. My impression in the 1950s was that it had been some kind of narrow gauge track, and I now wonder whether it might have been a vestige of the unsuccessful copper mining operations in the Swiftcurrent Valley which had given birth to the temporary boom town of Altyn not far below Many Glacier in the late 1890s.

The **TABASCO** Four-Top

By Hank Overturf (*Many Glacier 1970-72*)

I was preparing my waiter's station when the Many Glacier dining room opened for breakfast. It was one of those beautiful mornings and I was on the lake side of the dining room so it was necessary to give the guests a few extra minutes to look out the windows before asking for their breakfast orders. The first table seated was a four-top of two couples. Each couple was nicely dressed and appeared to be in their 60's or early 70's. They were lively and animated. I walked over, introduced myself and endured the normal questions about my major in school and where was the best place to see a glacier, etc. Their deep southern accents were pleasant and cultured.

They all ordered the normal fare of bacon and eggs and potatoes, with lots of coffee. I brought their coffee with cream and sugar when one of the gentlemen asked for something that was new to me. "Son, could you bring me the Tabasco Sauce?" the gentleman I'll call Joseph asked.

"Certainly, sir," I stated, and retired to my station to fetch the hot sauce. When I brought it back, I watched as they passed the bottle around and each shook fifteen to twenty drops of the hot pepper sauce into their coffee!

"Hank, you'd better bring another bottle of this sauce, as this one is only half full and we'll use what's left before the main course gets here," Joseph said. I left to place their order, pick up their orange juice and fruit, and get another bottle of Tabasco Sauce.

Once in the kitchen, I remarked to several of my fellow waiters and

waitresses and busboys that they should look at my four top and watch those folks guzzle Tabasco Sauce. Then I recounted their use of Tabasco in their coffee and their request for additional sauce.

I returned to my station and served them their juice and fruit along with a fresh bottle of Tabasco. They drowned everything in the sauce. Grapefruit with Tabasco, prunes with Tabasco, orange juice with Tabasco, and finally something I had seen before – tomato juice with Tabasco. I was going to need an additional bottle of Tabasco Sauce, a big one.

The morning was fairly slow and I didn't have another table. I had the opportunity to converse with these nice folks and answer a lot of questions. Then I went back to the kitchen to get their breakfasts.

I was off duty for dinner, and I always have wondered who had the good fortune to wait on those folks. I sure hope that they had lots of Tabasco Sauce on hand.

I picked up their orders and placed them in front of the diners and re-freshed their coffees. Again everything, including the oatmeal, got a healthy dose of Tabasco. The brand new bottle soon was empty. I pulled out the reserve bottle that I had brought out with their orders and offered it to them. "Oh, thank you, Hank. We were running low," Joseph said with a grin.

By now I couldn't contain my curiosity. I blurted out, "You folks must really like Tabasco Sauce!"

They all chuckled. Joseph said, "Hank, this stuff is amazing. It is a disease preventative and helps keep us young. We go through two bottles per meal, and none of us have had any health problems. We hike and travel all over the world. Notice none of us are wearing glasses, and we all have our own teeth."

As Joseph and the rest of the guests talked about Tabasco Sauce, I learned that they were members of the family that produced it. The business was family owned and operated. The family would gather for several weeks a year and produce Tabasco Sauce. Then they all would go their separate ways and enjoy the income generated by diners who enjoy a hot pepper sauce.

They were friendly people. At the end of breakfast, we parted with handshakes and they left me a nice tip. When lunch came around, they asked for me as their waiter, and I made sure that I had three full bottles of Tabasco on hand. I was off duty for dinner, and I always have wondered who had the good fortune to wait on those folks. I sure hope that they had lots of Tabasco Sauce on hand.

The Adventures of Harlan Berntson continued from page 7.

The Knutson Company

The Knutson Company got the Glacier Park renovation contract because Don had gone to school with Connie Wirth, the head of the Park Service at the time. Connie Wirth was the son of Theodore Wirth, who was well known in Minneapolis where he was the Parks Superintendent for many years. Don Knutson, the head of the company, had told Harlan to do a good job because he thought that *he* might like to bid on the hotels himself.

During its tenure, Knutson and Co. decided to really promote the Glacier Park hotels. Thus, they persuaded 1950's celebrities like Tennessee Ernie Ford, Edward R. Murrow, Groucho Marx, and the very popular governor of Montana to come out and stay for free in hopes that they would go back home and talk up the good time that they had had in the Park.

Knutson seemed to like the hospitality business. He had inherited a hotel in Moorhead, Minnesota, through default and had leased two more in Minot, North Dakota. Eventually, Don Hummel, the former mayor of Tucson, purchased the hotels.

It is not certain what would have happened to these beloved structures if these renovations had not taken place. The Great Northern had been trying to sell them at least since the early 1950's. They were in such a condition that there was even talk of tearing down Many Glacier. Through intense effort, Harlan and his crews most likely saved these beautiful lodges from either

and he was able to hire Mariam Midby for his office on the first floor of the annex.

The Great Northern must be recognized for continuing to operate these antique accommodations for so many years. It is reported that 1929 was the only year when the railroad saw a profit!

Through intense effort, Harlan and his crews most likely saved these beautiful lodges from either neglect or destruction, enabling many future generations to enjoy them.

neglect or destruction, enabling many future generations to enjoy them.

Harlan labored tremendously long hours at his Glacier Park work and got a huge amount of satisfaction from a job extremely well done. He felt that the Great Northern was very supportive all the way through. When he was at Glacier Park Lodge, he decided that he needed a secretary because the paperwork was so overwhelming. The Great Northern complied with his request

These hotels and all the great western lodges are genuinely national treasures. Their beauty and the sense of history that they impart are gifts to all the peoples of the world.

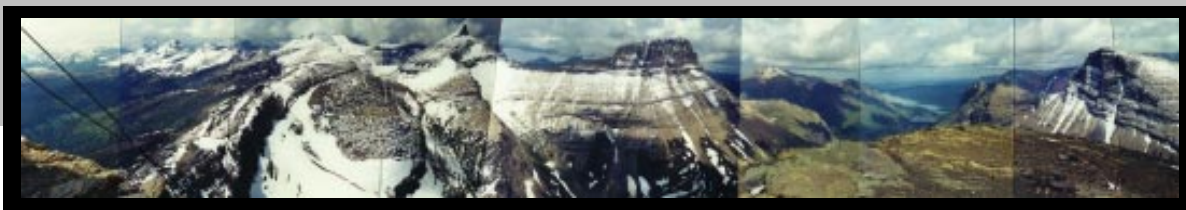
(Harlan Berntson has been retired for several years and lives in a suburb of the Twin Cities. This story is compiled from interviews which he conducted with Tessie Bundick, the chief historian for the Glacier Park Foundation.)

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(Panorama by Christine Baker.)