

THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation Spring 2024 Volume XXXX, No. 1

Tales of St. Mary



*Ranger Hugh Black, founder of the St. Mary Village cabins, motels and lodge, at Logan Pass, circa 1932.
(Photo courtesy of Sally Black Welder)*

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The INSIDE NEWS of Glacier National Park

A Mild Winter in Glacier

Snowfall was light this winter in the Glacier Park area. In April, the weather station on Flattop Mountain recorded about 80% of average snowpack. Snowmelt that feeds the streams in Glacier will be reduced, and elevated fire danger is likely later in the season.

Chris Peterson, editor of the *Hungry Horse News*, reflected recently on diminished snowmelt in Glacier (March 20, 2024). He stated: “Last summer we hiked up to Brown’s Pass in Glacier National Park and crossed a large swath of what

should have been Bowman Creek. While the creekbed was at least 100 feet wide, there wasn’t a drop of water in it. ... The camp at Brown’s Pass was bone dry, the creekbed there looked like it hadn’t had water in it in months. ... The same problem exists in other Glacier Park camps, most notably Fifty Mountain ... In order to find water you have to hike farther and farther from camp, and I suspect that in the not-too-distant future, there won’t be any water at all later in the season.”

Peterson cited a recent study by the U.S. Geological Survey on

shrinking of glaciers in the western United States (*Hungry Horse News*, March 13, 2024). Using aerial photos and other imaging, the study found that eleven glaciers in Glacier have fragmented. Peterson reports: “The study found that Agassiz, Blackfoot, Carter, Dixon, Harrison, Kintla, Logan, Shepard, Two Guns, Siyeh and Whitecrow glaciers had broken into pieces.” Boulder Glacier no longer qualifies as a glacier, but is classified as a perennial snowfield.

The Conservancy

The Glacier National Park Conservancy, official fundraising partner of Glacier National Park, has released a brochure detailing its work last year and its projects for 2024. The Conservancy raised \$3.5 million last year in private money to supplement Glacier’s budget. It funded 45 projects and contributed funding to 78 park staff positions.

The brochure emphasizes wilderness work. The vast majority of

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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.

Glacier's million acres are managed as wilderness. The Conservancy matched a large gift from philanthropist David Kirkland that creates a Wilderness Management Endowment. The endowment and annual gifts from the Conservancy help fund trail repair, rehabilitation of wilderness areas, and habitat conservation.

The Conservancy has funded an important study on wolverines. Research indicates that only about 300 wolverines live in the lower 48 states, and that about 40 are in Glacier. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the wolverine as an endangered species in 2023.

Another ongoing study focuses on harlequin ducks. These striking creatures (named for their masquerade-like chestnut, blue and white plumage) nest along fast-moving mountain streams. Glacier has the highest-density breeding population in the lower 48 states, but loss of habitat makes them a species of concern.

The Conservancy supports Glacier's Citizen Science Program, supervised by park biologist Jami Belt. Volunteers assist the park in gathering biological data, with training and tools provided by park staff. The program has gathered data on numerous species, including hawks and other raptors, loons, mountain goats and bighorn sheep, pikas, and dragonflies.

The Conservancy supports park history and cultural projects. These include Native America Speaks talks and funding for cultural researchers in Glacier. Another project supports Glacier's archives staff in digitizing historical photos for posting on the internet. The

brochure displays striking photos, including a Blackfoot Tribal band (with full headdresses, buckskins, tubas, and a bass drum!) at Logan Pass for the 1933 dedication of Going-to-the-Sun Road, and a fearsome washout of the road above sheer cliffs in the flood of 1964.

The Conservancy frequently hosts conversations on Glacier Park topics. Recordings of the conversations are posted on its website, www.glacier.org. An intriguing conversation in March 2024 involved Doug Mitchell, executive director of the Conservancy, his colleague Amy Lucke, and Josh Hurley, winterkeeper at Many Glacier Hotel. Hurley vividly describes his daily patrols through the frozen

Reservations also will be required at the Many Glacier entrance station from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. beginning on July 1st. They also are required in the North Fork. Reservations are not required to enter Going-to-the-Sun Road westbound at St. Mary, nor are they required at Two Medicine.

Reservations were available 120 days in advance, but some are set aside for next-day entry. Next-day reservations are available at 7 p.m. Mountain Time online at Recreation.gov or by phone at (877) 444-6777.

Construction work with fiber optic lines will occur on several roads, including the Many Glacier entrance

Reservations are required for eastbound travel on Going-to-the-Sun Road from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The checkpoint for reservations is at the turnoff for the Apgar Loop Road.

building, with ice crystals sparkling in the lobby, as if he were "walking into a geode." He tells of the cold setting off a fire alarm and freezing pipes in his chalet (obliging him to hunker down for hours in a crawl space thawing them with a hairdryer). He tells of the array of wildlife in the deserted valley: wolverines, mountain lions, wolves, bears.

Roads and Campgrounds

Reservations are required for eastbound travel on Going-to-the-Sun Road from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The checkpoint for reservations is at the turnoff for the Apgar Loop Road. Vehicles without a reservation must turn left to Apgar, where limited parking will cause congestion.

road, where travelers may encounter lane reductions. Much of that road remains graveled, with paving scheduled for 2027. Dust mitigation work has been scheduled.

The North Lake McDonald Road will be closed for the full 2024 season. A new bridge is being constructed over Upper McDonald Creek, to provide better access and fire protection to private homes, trailheads, and the Lake McDonald Ranger Station.

Most frontcountry campgrounds are operating under a reservation system this summer. Reservations were available on Recreation.gov six months in advance. Some campsites at each campground, however, can

be reserved four days in advance. This accommodates those of us who procrastinate (whom the Park Service kindly describes as “visitors with more spontaneous itineraries”).

Xanterra

Vicki Murphy, general manager for Xanterra’s Glacier National Park Lodges, took over for Andy Stiles last July when Stiles was transferred to the Grand Canyon. Murphy brings a wealth of experience to the task of opening the lodges for the summer. She has worked in the concession for twenty-five years, most recently as director of lodging. She also has managed the red buses, security, laundry, and many other operations in Glacier’s concession.

Murphy is supported by veteran location managers. Matt LaSalle returns as manager at Lake McDonald Lodge, and Rochelle Becker returns at Many Glacier Hotel. Josh Hurley, the Many Glacier winterkeeper, will manage Swiftcurrent Motor Inn.

Xanterra is sponsoring a hiking club for its employees. Employees log the miles they’ve hiked on Glacier’s trails and qualify for prizes. One hundred miles logged wins a pair of fancy “100 Mile Club” socks, and 500 miles wins a festive hat. (Employees now log out on hikes and log in again electronically, where prior generations scribbled out and in on a sign-out sheet.)

Many Glacier’s long tradition of employee musical entertainment for visitors will be maintained this year. Head Bellman Erik Pearson will lead weekly Hootenannies in the lobby. Pearson took over leadership of the Hoots last summer, his first season at

Many Glacier. He is a professional Shakespearian actor, and programs last summer included cuttings from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Murphy hopes to expand entertainment programs and add educational programs at Many Glacier and at Lake McDonald Lodge. The Park Service is offering fewer ranger talks because of reductions in staff. The Glacier Park Foundation will work with Xanterra to enhance programming for guests.

Red Buses

Glacier’s red bus fleet is approaching the midpoint of a rebuilding program. Xanterra’s contract calls for it to use 2½ % of its income to rehabilitate the buses. Thirty-three of the historic “reds” (which date from 1936 to 1939) will be in service this summer. They last were rebuilt, with new chassis and engines, in 2001-02.

The current rebuilding again includes new chassis and engines. It also involves better heating systems, modern LED brake signals and turn signals, and historically accurate dashboard features. The durable, beloved original cabs remain the same.

Small batches of buses are being rebuilt each winter by Legacy Classic Trucks in Idaho. Eleven buses have been rebuilt. Five others have been given new engines, but must go back to Idaho for new chassis (which were delayed by supply-chain problems).

Four more buses have been rebuilt this winter and are expected back for the opening of Going-to-the-Sun Road around June 15th.

Forty-eight bus drivers are on the crew this summer. Most are either students or retirees. Three-fourths of them have driven in Glacier before. Bill Trimble first drove a red bus in 1961, spent decades in law enforcement, and now drives once again after more than 60 years! Rick French has driven for 34 summers. Dave Eglsaer returns as transport manager for a 19th consecutive year.

Pursuit

Pursuit, which operates lodges at Glacier’s gateways, has new location managers. Keegan Maravillas is manager at Glacier Park Lodge, where he was assistant last summer. Drew Wilkerson, who was assistant last year at St. Mary Village, takes over as manager there. Bronson Albano returns as location manager at Prince of Wales Hotel.

Pursuit’s staff is working with the Glacier Park Foundation to host a reunion of alumni from all the Glacier-area lodges in July 2025. John Dobbertin (who organized a Glacier Park Lodge alumni reunion in 2023) and Carol Dahle (who organized a Many Glacier reunion in 2022) are leading this project for the Foundation. We appreciate the help of Pursuit’s general manager Rob Spence and his colleagues.

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THE TRAIN RUNS BOTH WAYS

A new book about the Blacks of St. Mary

“The train runs both ways!” Hugh Black would gruffly observe to employees at St. Mary Lodge.

By John Hagen (Many Glacier 1970-80)

“The train runs both ways!” Hugh Black would gruffly observe to employees at St. Mary Lodge. In bygone decades, most of them came from Minnesota. They rode the Great Northern Railway westward at the beginning of the summer. Hugh’s epigram (like Ian Tippet’s “Down the road!” at Many Glacier) implied that a lazy employee soon might be on the train back to Minnesota.

The Train Runs Both Ways now is the title of a delightful history of the St. Mary village and of the Black family. The author is Terry Welder, a longtime St. Mary employee and the husband of Hugh’s youngest daughter, Sally Black Welder.

Hugh came to Glacier Park as a college student in 1926. He was hired by the Park Service and spent several summers fighting fires, clearing trails, and chasing bears out of the camps of the construction workers on Going-to-the-Sun Road.

In 1928, Hugh encountered Margaret James on horseback on the Scenic Point trail. Margaret was a secretary for Louis Hill of the Great Northern and his minions at the Glacier Park Hotel (now Glacier Park Lodge) in East Glacier. She was a spirited personality, “born with a smile on her face” into the family of a St. Paul railroad worker. She prospered by talent and hard work. She twice was selected as “Miss Glacier Park.”

Hugh and Margaret dated for several summers. The Park Service stationed Hugh at St. Mary, where the nearly-completed

Going-to-the-Sun Road met the Blackfeet Highway. Hugh foresaw a great demand for tourist

Hugh foresaw a great demand for tourist housing at this junction. He rented land there, including a Texaco station and an old general store.



housing at this junction. He rented land there, including a Texaco station and an old general store.

In 1932, Hugh left the Park Service. He vigorously started building cabins and the Curly Bear Café. That same year, he and Margaret were married. They lived that winter in the café and expanded the business. They built about 50 cabins (some of which, near a little creek, were waggishly called the “cabins with running water”).

The cabins were small, rustic, neatly built, and painted white. They were advertised as the “Hugh Black Cabins.” Tourists occasionally would ask, “Where are these huge black cabins? All we can see are little white ones!”

Old St. Mary

Welder gives intriguing details linking the Blacks to figures who long preceded the founding of Glacier National Park. The original St. Mary village (“Old St. Mary”) was founded in the 1860s. Among its residents was James



Gas Station & Store



The Curly Bear Cafe



The first cabins

In 1932, Hugh left the Park Service. He vigorously started building cabins and the Curly Bear Café.



Margaret was twice voted "Miss Glacier Park" in 1928 or 1929.



Terry, Margaret, Patsy, Lucky, Hugh Jr., Hugh Sr., Roscoe, and Sally Black, 1950s

Hugh Black on snowshoes patrol in the early 1930s.



Willard Schultz, the author who lived with the Blackfeet and was known as "Rising Wolf." Hugh and Margaret knew him and other old-timers.

One resident of Old St. Mary was Jack Monroe. He helped guide the Stevens party over Marias Pass in 1892 to plot the route of the Great Northern Railway. The Blacks bought Monroe's log cabin and moved it to their property, where it became a Blackfeet craft store.

Another of the guides of the Stevens party was the notorious Joe Cosley. He became one of Glacier's first rangers, named some of its lakes, and poached game on the side. He went to fight in World War One, returned

to become a full-time poacher, and was apprehended and fined.

Hugh was one of the rangers who scoured the Belly River valley to find Cosley's cache. But Cosley had paid his fine, hot-footed it to the cache, and escaped to Canada before the rangers arrived. Years later, Hugh would occasionally find him visiting Babb – "the first hippie," says Welder, "with his long white hair tied with a little ribbon."

The moving of buildings, such as Monroe's log cabin, is a striking feature of Welder's account. Some of the Blacks' original fifty small cabins were shuttled around and used for employee housing. Others were sold to local residents and hauled away from St. Mary. Still others were moved to a lo-

cal prairie to get them out of the way and are "slowly disintegrating" – some of them upside down!

The Forties and Fifties

During World War Two, tourism in Glacier vanished because of gasoline rationing, and the Blacks suspended operations. Hugh ran an enormous herd of cattle. During the winters he supervised crews that cut blocks of ice on St. Mary Lake to refrigerate cars for the Great Northern and storage for Pacific Fruit. He snowshoed from St. Mary to Browning and then hitchhiked to Cut Bank to attend meetings as a Glacier County Commissioner.

In 1944, the Park Service hired Hugh to demolish the weathered St. Mary Chalets. He was to be paid

In 1952, the Blacks began the construction of St. Mary Lodge. It opened in July 1953, just in time to host the cast and crew of the Hollywood movie “Cattle Queen of Montana” starring were Reagan and Barbara Stanwyck. Reagan famously helped the teenaged Roscoe clean bathrooms so that he could leave work early and take him fishing.

\$10,000, with the proviso that he do no damage to trees. Hugh used a bulldozer to push the buildings onto the frozen St. Mary Lake, where they were burned and the charred wood sank. He did the same thing with the eighteen decrepit buildings of Going-to-the-Sun Chalets in 1948.

Meanwhile, at St. Mary, the Blacks built the West Motel. They had six children – Hugh Jr., Patsy, Roscoe, Terry, James (called “Lucky,” because he was a thirteenth grandchild) and Sally. They bought a house on Summit Avenue, the grandest street in St. Paul. Margaret went there with the children in the winter.

In 1952, the Blacks began the construction of St. Mary Lodge. It opened in July 1953, just in time to host the cast and crew of the Hollywood movie *Cattle Queen of Montana*. The stars were Ronald Reagan and Barbara Stanwyck. Reagan famously helped the teenaged Roscoe clean bathrooms so that Roscoe could leave work early and take him fishing.

The Sixties and Seventies

The ‘60s and ‘70s were colorful decades. Story after amazing story is told in the pages of Welder’s book. The great floods of 1964 and 1975 inundated St. Mary village and required massive cleanup. The Blacks remodeled their operation after the flood of 1975.

A St. Mary Christmas Reunion was held each December at the Blacks’ house in St. Paul.

More than a hundred employees would attend. After the reunion, Margaret would interview prospective employees for the next summer in her living room. Then the family and some of their friends would drive to Florida for a brief vacation.

Hugh gradually took a less active role in the St. Mary operation. Roscoe took over as manager in the mid-1970s and remained in that capacity until 2005.

Roscoe and two fellow hikers suffered a fearsome grizzly attack on Stoney Indian Pass in 1976. He was badly mauled and hospitalized for weeks. Much later, he was interviewed about the attack for Ken Burns’s *National Parks*.

Subsequent Decades

Hugh died in February 1983, after 50 years of marriage with Margaret. His funeral Mass had five priests, some of whom were former St. Mary employees. He was buried on a hill overlooking the lodge, amid the warmth of a sudden Chinook.

Margaret continued vigorously managing St. Mary’s books and finances. Each night she would lug about \$30,000 in cash from the lodge to her “counting house,” attached to the family home.

She took those walks unguarded,

although the lodge had suffered three robberies! Her “vault” was a sort of closet in her office. Once it was inadvertently locked, the key was misplaced, and a hole had to be knocked through the wall with a sledge hammer to fetch out cash so the lodge could operate.

Margaret retired in 1999, at the age of 97. She still was driving Going-to-the-Sun Road and cross-country skiing in her nineties! She died in 2008, at the age of 105, and was buried on the hill with Hugh.

Meanwhile, the Great Bear Lodge was added to the St. Mary operation. It has 48 rooms, all facing the park. In 2005, the Blacks leased their business to a management company. In 2008, the business was sold.

Welder tells a hilarious tale of the company that initially bought the business. They installed a dozen custom-built teepees with king-sized beds and six-foot TV screens. The teepees, however, proved unusable because the noise from Kip’s Beer Garden kept the guests awake! Then a ferocious East Side wind came down from the mountains and toppled the teepees.

Soon after this, the St. Mary operation was sold to Glacier Park, Inc. (since renamed Pursuit). Tiny houses were added to the facilities.

The Black family still own a cluster of cabins, high on the hill above the lodges, near the graves of Margaret and Hugh.

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TALES OF ST. MARY

Excerpts from The Train Runs Both Ways

In the spring of 1926, Hugh Black and a friend decided to head out for the West.

Hugh at the St. Mary Chalets, which he later razed.

(all photos courtesy of Terry and Sally Black Welder)



In the spring of 1926, Hugh Black and a friend decided to head out for the West.

By Terry Welder (St. Mary Lodge 1968-75; Park Service 1990-2005)

Hugh Comes to Glacier

In the spring of 1926, Hugh Black and a friend decided to head out for the West. They bought an old Model T touring car and cut down the back of the front seat so that they could convert the seats into a bed at night and camp right in the car. It took a little over a week for them to get from their homes in Michigan to Midvale (now East Glacier Park).

One of the first people they ran into was Chief Ranger Nick Carter, a native of Michigan. He was looking for help and the boys were looking for work, so things fell into place pretty quickly.

Hugh's first assignment was with a

trail crew building a trail along the north side of McDonald Creek toward the junction with Logan Creek, so that horses wouldn't have to cross the newly constructed Going-to-the-Sun Road so often between Lake McDonald and Granite Park or Logan Pass. At that time, the road construction crews were working their way uphill on the western side of the road. They were already well beyond the Loop, where the pack-saddle trail came down from Granite Park Chalets.

The Big Burn

Hugh had only been working on the Logan Creek trail project for a couple of weeks when the Big Burn of 1926 blew up on the West Side of the Park. All non-essential projects were suspended, and Hugh found himself in a fire camp. Even though he was only 24, he was put in charge of a fire crew and spent the rest of that season fighting the fire.

At one point, in a situation reminiscent of *Young Men and Fire*, Hugh's

crew was working its way up a hill east of Polebridge when the fire crowned, contradicted physics, and rushed back down the hill at the crew. They promptly started a back fire, stepped into the middle of the burned area, and waited while the approaching fire surrounded their island of safety. Hugh clearly possessed a great deal of common sense and valuable intuition to be able to figure that out with so little actual firefighting experience.

That first summer in Glacier was like an adventure novel, and Hugh met a number of interesting characters while working the fire. Although I wonder about chronology and creative memory, I have to take Hugh's word for it that he met Charlie Russell stopping into the fire camps at night to encourage and visit with the crews. My skepticism stems from the fact that Charlie Russell was dead by October of 1926 and must have been struggling with his health. Nevertheless, we know that Charlie did some strange and remarkable



Margaret and Midget, on whom she was riding when she met Hugh.

Margaret came to Glacier in 1928 and soon fell in love with horseback riding.

things in his life.

Hugh had a 14-year-old water boy on his crew named Ace Powell, who later became another notable Western artist. Hugh watched Ace riding down a trail into camp when a wind came up and dropped a 24-inch spruce across the trail, four feet in front of Ace's horse. When the dust cleared, Hugh saw Ace sitting calmly on his horse on the other side of the tree, rolling a cigarette!

Margaret Comes to Glacier

Margaret Mary James was the oldest of seven children in the family of a lifelong railroad worker. Word has it that she was born with a smile on her face in 1902, and it pretty much stayed there until her last breath, at 105, in February 2008, at her youngest daughter's home in Kalispell, Montana.

Margaret knew a number of friends from St. Paul schools who had followed the railroad and the Hill family to Glacier National Park. So when she heard about a secretarial opening at the Glacier Park Hotel Company in St. Paul, she was eager for an interview. When she heard that her office would move to Midvale (East Glacier) in June she felt like she was "the luckiest girl in the world," especially since any job was difficult to come by at that time.

Margaret came to Glacier in 1928 and soon fell in love with horseback riding. A man by the name of Dutch Hughes ran a stable and horse concession in Midvale and he often let Margaret borrow a horse in her spare time. Her favorite horse was Midget, and Margaret rode her at every opportunity during her years of working at East Glacier Lodge.

Margaret Meets Hugh

One day, Margaret recalled, "a couple of bellhops asked Betty Griffith and me if we would like to get horses and go over Mount Henry, have dinner at the Two Medicine Chalets and come home by moonlight. That sounded simply marvelous to me. So, we got our horses and that was my first time to go over a mountain on a horse."

After dinner at Two Medicine, they started back. As they approached the ranger station, the boys said, "We're going to leave you here. ... We shouldn't have these horses in the Park. So, we'll go around the ranger station and meet you further on. But Hugh Black won't say anything to girls."

Hugh was checking the back country on horseback when he ran into the two women on the trail. He watered their horses and said, "If you are going to get home before dark, you

better get going pretty quick." Margaret recalled that "we went around the corner and the fellas were waiting for us and we got on home."

A Flubbed First Date

Margaret went on to relate: "A couple of boys from the orchestra went over to Two Medicine the next day and they had the right kind of horses, so they went through the checking station and Hugh said to them, 'You know those two girls, Margaret and Betty, that work in the office? Well, get me a date with the good looking one.'

"One of those guys, Don O'Connor, was from St. Paul and was [my brother] Marty's age. And I knew him and we used to play hide and seek together and such. And so, of course, he didn't think of me as being good looking at all. So he asked Betty!"

A couple of weeks later, Margaret saw Hugh at a dance. They danced to a Victrola, and she recalls that "the floor wasn't even – it was terrible!" Thereafter, "every time he would come to town, he came over and asked me for a date, but I would always be dated up."

A Long Relationship

Margaret went back to Saint Paul and worked for the Glacier Park Hotel Company in the Great Northern office until it was time to go back to East Glacier in May of 1929. Hugh was stationed at the Cut Bank Ranger Station that summer. On Sundays, Margaret and several friends would hitch a ride to Cut Bank with Father Halligan, the priest from Browning, on his way to say Mass in Babb. Hugh would fix dinner for them and drive them back home.

In 1930, Hugh was assigned to road patrol on the West Side. Margaret recalled that “we were separated that whole year,” because Going-to-the-Sun Road wasn’t finished yet and there was no road yet from East Glacier to West Glacier. “Just the railroad was open and they had flat-cars to take your automobile across.”

In 1931, Hugh was back on the East Side, working at the Two Medicine checking station, the Cut Bank Ranger Station and the St. Mary Ranger Station. He and Margaret continued to see each other whenever they could at Cut Bank or in East Glacier.

Hugh recalled, “I quit the Park Service in April of 1932 and went right to work building in St. Mary.” He built the first two white cabins for rental. They rented for \$1.50 or \$2.00, with bedding provided. They were equipped with a wood stove and a bucket of water.

Hugh and Margaret were engaged early that summer. They were married by Father Halligan in September 1933, the day after Glacier Park Hotel shut down for the summer. They drove to the Banff Springs Hotel for their brief honeymoon. Margaret continued to work for the hotel company until closing up the books in October, when she joined Hugh

in St. Mary. She recalls, “Oh, it was a long, cold winter!”

St. Mary Winters

Hugh Black and Margaret James definitely knew what it was like to pioneer in the West and they were unusually tough and resilient customers. I am simply chilled to the bone when I think about how difficult it was to stay alive, let alone make a living, in the St. Mary winters of the early 1930s. The wind is almost constant and sometimes reaches speeds of over 100 miles per hour. Temperatures of -40 degrees are not uncommon and the snow sometimes falls in single episodes of four feet or more.

In the 1970s, a pair of skis hung above the fireplace in the Blacks’ family living room. They were a pair that Hugh had sometimes used in lieu of snowshoes when he had to travel cross-country to Browning for supplies or county commissioner meetings in the 1930s and 1940s. They were over seven feet long, made of solid wood, and must have weighed 15 pounds.

On one such occasion, in the early 1930s, Margaret mentioned to Hugh that she would trade the world for a fresh head of lettuce. Hugh got caught in a blizzard on the way home, just south of Hudson Bay

Divide. He dug a small snow cave for himself and the fresh produce and waited out the storm. Next morning, he arrived home in good condition with a relatively fresh head of lettuce.

The Local Community

Hugh and Margaret were always highly dependent upon seasonal and part-time help from local families. The Blacks were always well aware of this crucial interdependency, and sustaining genuine good will within the community was always extremely important. Members of nearly every family in the Babb/St. Mary Valley worked for at least a season at St. Mary, and many local residents worked with Hugh and Margaret for decades.

There were many winters when the Blacks’ St. Mary General Store was the only place between Browning and Cardston to buy groceries, and the money to buy groceries often ran short in the late winter. Mutual de-

Hugh recalled, “I quit the Park Service in April of 1932 and went right to work building in St. Mary.” He built the first two white cabins for rental.

Hugh and Margaret in the early 1930s.



dependencies often made it necessary for the Blacks to run credit accounts for local families until jobs came back in the late spring. This interdependency was well understood by everyone and the mutual good will did not go unrecognized.

Bucephalus

A favorite family horse story involves a gift horse that Hugh purchased for Margaret. Margaret always loved the classics and she decided to name the new horse Bucephalus, after Alexander the Great's storied horse. Hugh was just a bit concerned about the choice of names and said, "Oh, Margaret, you can't give a horse a name like that. How are the local cowboys supposed to remember that name when they are trying to wrangle the horses?"

She got the horse before World War II. When one of the Wagner boys, who had always worked with the horses, returned from the war, he stopped by the house to say hello. "Well, Mrs. Black, how is that old Bucephalus doing these days?" he inquired. Hugh just stood there with the brim of his hat in mid-bite, and Margaret just stood there grinning.

Trips to Florida

On one of the post-Christmas trips to Florida, the car became so crowded and noisy with kids, guitars and bongo drums, that Hugh asked Margaret to pull over to the side of the highway. "You see that hitch-hiker up there? Pull over!"

"But, Hugh," said Margaret, "we don't have another inch of room in this car!" "Well," Hugh responded, "he is getting in and I am getting out!" For some reason, the car became abnormally quiet for some time after that exchange.

On another occasion, the young boy Lucky went into the bathroom while Margaret was filling up with gas. She had travelled some distance down the road before anyone in the car bothered to mention that he was missing – they were all so thankful for the extra room in the car!

Margaret quickly turned around and drove back to the gas station. "Did you see a young boy coming out of the bathroom a little while ago?" she asked. "Oh, yes," said the attendant. "He asked me which way was south and took off walking!"

Cattle Queen Memories

The movie *Cattle Queen of Montana* was largely filmed near St. Mary in 1953. It starred Ronald Reagan and Barbara Stanwyck. It also employed several Black family horses.

One morning, on a day off from filming, Ronald Reagan came across Roscoe in the middle of his toilet-cleaning chores. He asked him about the local fishing possibilities. Roscoe volunteered to show the future president some of his favorite fishing holes, but mentioned that he wouldn't be available until later in the afternoon when he had finished his chores. Naturally, in all his humility, the movie star and future president rolled up his sleeves and helped Roscoe with his job, so that they could get an earlier start.

The Black family enjoyed seeing their favorite family mounts in the film. A favorite scene involves a mounted "Indian maiden." She rides behind a teepee on one family horse and emerges on the other side of the teepee on a different family horse!

The Tanker Truck Tragedy

One Sunday morning in the late

1950s or early '60s, there was a horrific accident. Cousin Tom Black ("Poncho"), had the morning shift alone at the gas station. He remembers sitting in front of the station, half-dozing.

Poncho was alerted by the sound of a large gas tanker truck coming down the steep highway from Hudson Bay Divide, out of control. The driver was leaning on the horn and tires were screaming. Poncho looked up the road and immediately ran around the station and crouched up against the foundation.

There was a huge explosion and a tower of fire when the truck cab and tanker turned over on its side and slid into the gas pumps. When the fire was finally brought under control, Poncho remembers seeing the charred remains of the driver lying in perfect driving position, on his side, on the pavement beyond where the pumps had been. After that tragic incident, the State Highway Department constructed three emergency escape ramps at intervals along the hill coming down from the Divide.

A Warning to Employees

The summer of 1967 brought the infamous "Night of the Grizzlies" and the Glacier Wall fire on the west side of the Park. Early in the following summer, some employees borrowed the Black family Cadillac. They drove off intending to camp at Lake McDonald before hiking the next morning.

The 1967 fire had eaten away the subsoil on the edge of Going-to-the-Sun Road and one tire of the car caught the edge of the road. The driver was unable to bring the car back into the lane. It ended up rolling down the slope, just below the West Side tunnel, and was only

stopped by a couple of burned-out trees from rolling all the way down into the valley below. Fortunately, the employees sustained only minor injuries. But Hugh put the car on display in St. Mary, as a reminder to employees to be very careful in the ways they spent their time off.

The Inoperable Fire Truck

On Friday, March 13, 1969, the General Store burned to the ground. It probably should not have burned down completely, because the Blacks had purchased a fire truck some years before and it was customarily stored in a shed within 100 feet of the store. There were also usually at least two winter caretakers who minded the store and did winter building and maintenance jobs.

Unfortunately, Hugh had decided to entrust the fire truck to a local policeman, so that he could be prepared to respond to winter fires throughout the Valley. The policeman lived near Babb and should have been able to get to St. Mary within 20 minutes. Alas, he had experienced a tire emergency on his own pickup that winter and had put the fire truck up on blocks so that he could use the tires on his work truck. Needless to say, the General Store became a bonfire of the vanities.

Cleaning Out the Vault

The last burglary, as I remember, was on a Sunday afternoon in 1974. Little Rock (Roscoe's oldest son) was napping in the loft above the family living room. He heard someone come in through the front porch asking for Mr. Black. Rocky didn't recognize the man, but it wasn't uncommon for people to walk into the family home at any time of day.

Rocky remembered saying that he thought Grandpa was back in the office or over at the lodge and then returning to the loft bedroom. It wasn't until evening that Mrs. Black discovered that the vault had been cleaned out.

The FBI found that one or more people had been surveilling the house for some time before the robbery, from the roof of the Anaconda Building (Maintenance) across the street. They found a substantial pile of cigarette butts and a worn area on the roofing, directly across from the office door. Whoever had performed this burglary, and probably the others, had been watching routines to see when Mrs. Black and her office assistants went to lunch or left on breaks. It turned out that Sunday afternoon, the busiest time of the busiest day, was the ideal time to dash with the cash.

The office vault was seldom locked

The house office is no longer used. It's part of the rental unit called the "Homestead House." But the hole in the vault wall, covered by a picture, is still there.

An Uproarious Talent Show

I well remember the last time we used the old log café. One of the annual employee events was the "Talent Show." All employees and many local characters would gather for a rather elaborate sequence of amateur musical performances and improvised skits. The costumes were ingeniously thrown together from whatever uniforms and other clothing and props were available.

Mrs. Black, Jean Mueller (the gift shop manager), and Teresa Gran (the restaurant hostess) were the judges for the competition. After the skits, always a 20-way tie, the elders would retire for the evening. Naturally, the talent show was followed by a "pow-wow," and the rumpus would begin.

[I]n my second year as assistant manager, Hugh felt that it was my role to stand guard at night against looters. I was equipped with a 12-gauge shotgun, which I had no ability or intent to brandish. . . . I was as intimidated by the proximity of the shotgun as I was by the force of the flood.

and at one point in 1975, one of the office girls inadvertently locked it. Margaret was unable to find the combination, and my brother Bob, who worked on the maintenance crew, was enlisted to knock a hole through the wall with a sledge hammer. That kind of work was right up Bob's alley and he thought that he had died and gone to heaven.

In the late summer of 1973 or 1974, we were all dancing "That Old Grizzly Bear" after the Talent Show. The old floor timbers of the café gave way and we all fell into the crawl space below! Fortunately, the floor and the ground were less than a foot apart, but the building was never repaired or used again after that party.

The Flood of 1975

The flood of 1975 actually caused more damage to St. Mary than the bigger 1964 flood had caused, because there was so much more to St. Mary than there had been in 1964. Once again, the flood struck in early June, filled the lodge basement, and flowed down the middle of Highway 89 on its way through town.

I was in my second year as assistant manager and Hugh felt that it was my role to stand guard at night against looters, in the loft of the store. I was equipped with a 12-gauge shotgun, which I had no ability or intent to brandish. I had never fired a shotgun in my life and I adamantly had refused to fire a weapon during my training in the Service. I was as intimidated by the proximity of the shotgun as I was by the force of the flood.

On the second night of my vigil, the water rose and the building began to sway. I took it upon myself to leave the building and wade to higher ground. I was pretty sure that no looters were going to brave the flood to break into a building that could collapse at any moment.

to break up the days of hard labor.

None of us will ever forget the “Night of the Howling,” when the entire village came down with extreme diarrhea in the middle of the night. Several turkeys had floated up the day before from the basement walk-in cooler and had immediately

[During the flood’s worst days,] there were unexpected gifts of floating bottles of wine and cans of beer to break up the days of hard labor.

been cooked for supper. Evidently, the meat had gone bad.

The Night of the Howling

Although the flood of 1975 was not as extensive as the flood of 1964 and no lives were lost, it was still a traumatic and exciting time. We had a full crew on hand and everyone worked long hours to get the business back on its feet by the 3rd of July. There were unexpected gifts of floating bottles of wine and cans of beer

Everyone believed that they were the only one who had developed stomach problems in their sleep. However, it quickly became obvious that there were not enough bathrooms in town to deal with the immediate needs of the entire village population. Many of us rushed outdoors to join in a chorus of howls that echoed from the surrounding hills. Fortunately, everything but the laughter seemed to have moved on by morning.

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Life in Glacier's Early Horse Camps

- Excerpts from an Interview with **BILL WANSE**R, a contemporary with **Hugh Black**

By *Rolf Larson* (*Many Glacier* 1975, '77-80), *Park Service* (1981-1985)

Excerpts from a Bill Wanser interview from the 1980s with Rolf Larson, courtesy of the Going-to-the Sun Journal of the Glacier Mountaineering Society.

Bill Wanser grew up in Glacier. His parents met in Glacier, working summers for the Noffsingers' Park Saddle Horse Company. From the age of two, for seventeen glorious summers, Glacier Park's mountains and streams were home for Bill in a way that only a child could understand.

His first two seasons (1922 and 1923) were spent at Two Medicine Camp where his mother Berith worked as a cook and his father DeWight (De) as corral boss. In 1924, they moved to the Belly River where his mother became manager and his father camp supervisor for the X6 Park Saddle Horse Camp at Crossley Lake (now Cosley Lake).

Among his earliest memories were images of crossing the Belly River in wagons from Canada on their way to establishing the summer camps. Those moments were very special for Bill because they were not part of a vacation or adventure, as we see them, but were, in a real sense, trips home.

It is from this perspective that Bill Wanser experienced and remembered those days; days when Glacier was a horse park (the largest of its

kind); days when the "wild west" role flourished in Glacier.

Hugh Black worked in the front country along the fledgling road system. Wanser grew up in the back country with the original means of travel, the horse. In the beginning, everything had to be hauled in by wagon from Canada under bond or by pack horses over mountain passes to the Crossley Lake campsite.

"We forded the Belly River in mid-July in 1924. I faintly recall my mother being very unhappy that my father had loaded sacks of sugar in the bottom of the wagon and the lumber on top!

"The first dudes were through camp in 1925. Our camp staff at that time consisted of two girls who waited on tables, did the laundry, plus a host of other duties. We also had a cook, a horse wrangler who doubled as a bell-hop, my mother as manager, and me.

"Although hikers, who in those days comprised only about one-percent of the park's traveling public, stayed infrequently at the camp. Hikers, unlike horseback dudes, did not originate through the auspices of the Park Saddle Horse headquarters at Many Glacier. At any rate, we charged a standard rate (1929 rates) of three dollars a night for three meals and a bed.

"Horseback dudes paid fifty dollars for the five-day North Circle trip.

"I had been told that at the peak of the tourist season in the 1930s there

were eighteen-hundred head, counting brood mares under this brand. At one time, my dad told me that he had seen nine-hundred-head saddled up and ready to go for the run up Icicle, which was the Iceberg Lake trail, Grinnell, Cracker Lake or for the North Circle five-day trip.

"Although I didn't know the earliest Rangers, Joe Cosley lived in the Belly River country around that time. I hear that he was a pretty private person, since trapping in the park was forbidden.

"I did happen upon one of his log cabins on the Midale Fork that, to this date, remains hidden to rediscovery. In 1977, Park Ranger Dave Shea and I, with friends Bob and Marie Hardie of Seattle, Washington, tried our very best to find this cabin, but without success. I recall finding the one-room cabin with the roof members caved in, sort of in an inverted vee. I worked my way in and found shreds of hide on wooden pegs. There was a skin stretcher still leaning against the outside of the main structure. Even though it is approaching fifty-odd years, I'll bet that old cabin still stood up there in the timber."

With the advent of the automobile, the future would belong to people like Hugh and Margaret Black. Backcountry horse trips fell out of favor while the people who developed facilities along the roads became the future of recreation in places like Glacier National Park.

Almost a Dog Mountain

In the summer of 1983, Dan Spencer, Katryn Conlin and I spent eight weeks in Glacier National Park hiking and climbing.

Dan Maturen and Dan Spencer on Almost-a-Dog Mountain, 1983. (Dan Spencer photo)

Adventure in Glacier's High Country



By Dan Maturen (Swiftcurrent 1976-82; Park Service 1984-93, 2008; Montana Raft 1994-95; Rising Sun 2012; West Glacier 2017)

In the summer of 1983, Katryn Conlin, Dan Spencer and I spent eight weeks in Glacier National Park hiking and climbing. Most of our adventures were off-trail, and they included the following trips – Cut Bank to Red Eagle Pass, the White Calf to Curly Bear Traverse, Jackson Glacier Overlook to Red Eagle Pass, Many Glacier to Ipasha Peak, Goat Haunt to Goat Haunt via Brown Pass/Nahsukin Lake/Waterton River Valley, and Mt. Merritt.

Our base camp for that summer was Thronson's Motel and Cabins. I convinced the Thronson family to rent us a cabin for two months. They charged a total of \$150. It was nice to periodically have a roof over our

heads, to organize gear and food, to have a shower and to sleep in a bed.

I will focus my story on our adventure to Almost-a-Dog Pass. It was an incredible journey crossing the Jackson and Blackfoot Glacier basins. We had a permit for an undesignated campsite 1500 feet below Almost-a-Dog Pass.

After our first night camping, we climbed up to the pass. Our ultimate goal that day was to climb Little Chief Mountain. As we headed east on a goat trail, we stopped and ascended Almost-a-Dog Mountain. Dan and I agreed this was the scariest peak we'd ever been on. It was extremely narrow at the top, with a large crack in the summit that plunged down a thousand-plus feet into the abyss.

Returning to the goat trail, we had an easy ridgewalk up to the top of Little Chief Mountain. We were

thankful not to have ascended by the traditional, extremely arduous Virginia Falls route.

In the summit register was a handwritten note from Don Scharfe, the owner of Rocky Mountain Outfitters in Kalispell, Montana. It was a coupon for ten percent off at his store. More than thirty years later I presented it to him there. We had a good laugh about it.

Heading back to our campsite, we decided to take some time to find the famous "ramp" that Gordon Edwards describes in his *Climbers Guide*. This ramp is hidden from view and is parallel to the cliff face. It is about ten feet wide and descends to Red Eagle Pass. We found the ramp, headed down and spent a short time in the Red Eagle Pass area.

The next day, Dan and I made an ascent of Blackfoot Mountain. The

Not sure what to do with lightning activity above us and below us. I handed my metal ice axe to my buddy Dan. I basically sprinted down to the tent. . . . Later he said that the ice axe had actually started to vibrate as he descended to our tent.

day started out with very warm temperatures. Even though we were in great shape, it was a physical struggle to get to the top because we had to post-hole our way up hundreds of vertical feet through lots of snow. After a quick lunch, we looked to the east and saw a very ominous feature – completely black clouds and weather.

We knew we had to move rapidly because the storm would be on us quickly. As we traversed on a ledge halfway across the west face of Mount Logan, it hit with a fury. Thunder, lightning, sleet, rain, hail, and temperatures dramatically dropping caused our bodies to start shivering. Unfortunately, we had traveled lightly and had only t-shirts and shorts on. Mount Logan literally was shaking and tossing rocks down on us as we tried to move quickly.

Finally, we made it to Almost-a-Dog Pass and could see our tent 1500 feet below us. At this juncture, lightning was striking above us but also

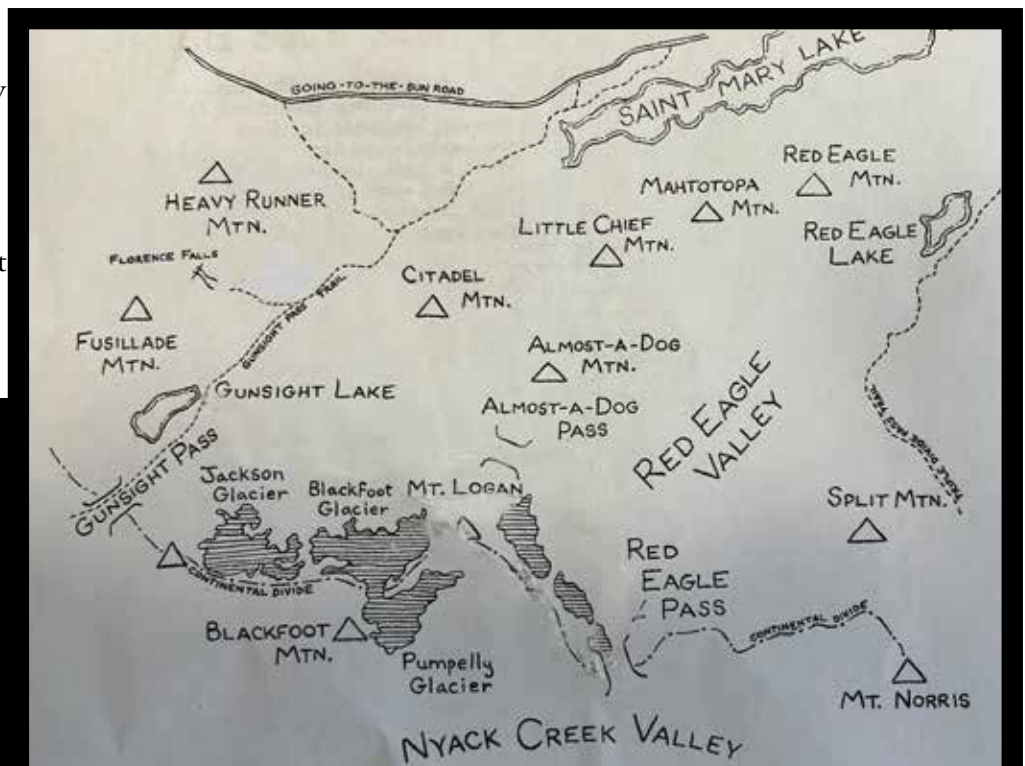
BELOW us. It repeatedly hit the saddle between Citadel Mountain and Almost-a-Dog Mountain. With each strike, a ball of electricity was created at least **30 feet in diameter!** I've never seen this before or since.

Not sure what to do with lightning activity above us and below us, I handed my metal ice axe to my buddy Dan. I basically sprinted down to the tent. Of course, we laugh about this today, but at the time he was a little peeved about having to carry the “electricity-attractor.” Later he said that the ice axe had actually started to vibrate as he descended to

our tent. Fortunately, Katryn was in the tent and had food ready, and we were able to recover from mild hypothermia in our sleeping bags.

Early the next day we traversed over to the saddle where the lightning balls had been created. We then climbed Citadel Mountain, returned to camp, packed up and hiked to our car on Going-to-the-Sun Road. Vivid memories of that adventure still prevail in my mind more than 40 years later.

One other memory of our trip was that we decided to go “light” on food. The objective was to reduce the weight of our overnight packs. Later we agreed that that that was a really foolish idea. We did not run out of food, but we were close. We didn't realize all the calories we'd be burning. By the end we were divvying up individual raisins! On subsequent treks, we always carried extra food and didn't worry about extra weight.



This map helps describe the area visited by the three explorers.

(John Hagen, illustration.)



Dan Spencer, Katryn Conlin and Dan Maturen on the summit of Little Chief Mounain, 1983. (Dan Spencer photo)

Almost-a-Dog Mountain

Almost-a-Dog Mountain and Pass lie in a remote backcountry section of Glacier Park, behind the great file of mountains on the southern shore of St. Mary Lake. The striking name is explained in Jack Holterman's invaluable *Place Names of Glacier National Park*. Almost-a-Dog was a Blackfeet man whose story spans two tragedies: the Baker Massacre of 1870 and the Starvation Winter of 1883-84.

The Baker Massacre arose from the murder of a trader, Malcolm Clarke. Clarke managed the fur trade at Fort Benton. He had two marriages to Blackfeet women and ultimately settled on a ranch near Helena with his second wife. He was killed there in 1869 by relatives of his first wife. Settlers demanded retaliation against the band of Mountain Chief, a relative of the first wife. Colonel Eugene Baker was sent on a punitive expedition in midwinter.

The Army had divided the Blackfeet chiefs into two lists, as "hostile" or "peaceful." Heavy Runner was listed as "peaceful." His band, including Almost-a-Dog, was camped on the Marias River. Many of them were ill with smallpox.

Baker and his troops found Heavy Runner's camp on an icy morning. A scout cried that this was the wrong camp. Baker silenced him and ordered his troops to fire. Holterman relates: "Heavy Runner hurried out of his tipi waving his identification papers, only to be mowed down with the rest. The dead included 120 men, 53 women and small children. The attack was called the Massacre on the Marias and evoked a public protest over the Army's treatment of Indians."

Almost-a-Dog was encamped with his parents, wife and small daughter when Baker attacked. His family were all killed. His daughter was shot as he tried to carry her to safety. He survived, but was maimed for life.

By 1883, the buffalo vanished, exterminated by wanton killing for sport. The Winter of Starvation followed. Holterman relates: "Almost-a-Dog kept count of his fellow tribesmen who perished by cutting notches on a stick – 555 notches."

All-Lodges Alumni Reunion COMING IN JULY 2025

There has been fantastic response to the news of a Glacier Park Employee Gathering at Glacier Park Lodge from Tuesday July 15 through Friday July 18, 2025. The gathering will include those who worked at all Glacier Park concessions. Glacier Park Lodge and Many Glacier Hotel reunion organizers John Dobbertin and Carol Dahle are planning this one together.

There may be a few rooms still available at Glacier Park Lodge, but there are more than 100 motel/cabin rooms in East Glacier Park. For reservations at Glacier Park Lodge, call Pursuit's Central Reservations Office toll-free: 1-844-868-7474. Reservations are taken from Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Time). Tell them you are attending the Glacier Park Lodge Employee Gathering 2025. Keep calling as they do receive cancellations!

Here is a list of most of the East Glacier Park area motels and dates that they begin accepting 2025 reservations:

- **East Glacier Park Motel & Cabins (now accepting) 406-845-5565**
- **Whistling Swan (now accepting) 406-226-4412**
- **Traveler's Rest Lodge (accepting Aug. 2024) 406-378-2414**
- **Jacobson's Cottages (accepting Oct. 2024) 406-226-4422**
- **Circle R Motel (accepting Jan. 2025) 406-226-9331**
- **Brownies Hostel & Bakery (accepting Jan. 2025) 406-270-2728**
- **Bison Creek Ranch 406-226-4482 (now accepting)**
- **Mountain Pine Motel 406-226-4403 (accepting Oct. 2024)**
- **Summit Mountain Lodge 406-226-9319 (check their website)**

Optional daytime programs are planned for Wednesday and Thursday mornings, July 16 and 17. Evening entertainment will be offered in Glacier Park Lodge's Great Lobby on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Grand Buffet Banquet will be Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in Glacier Park Lodge's Moccasin Room. Glacier Park Lodge tours are also planned for Wednesday afternoon.

A HOUSEBOY IN 1947

Working with Miss Leah de Zouche

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

Editor's Note: Dick Schwab contributed superbly-written stories of Glacier Park to The Inside Trail for several decades. Dick recently passed away, but left a trove of fine stories. We hope to publish an anthology of his work in a future issue.

My initial stroke of luck in Glacier Park was to be hired as a houseboy at Many Glacier Hotel. It was exactly the right job at the right place for me. Anyone writing about being a houseboy in that era must almost inevitably begin with a eulogy to Miss Leah de Zouche, the Housekeeper, who surely was the kindest and finest of the supervisors in the Park. She was a petite, white-haired woman, with glasses, dark eyes and brows, a gentle face, and a soft voice. When necessary, she could exert her will forcefully, but in general she handled the considerable responsibilities of housekeeping for the huge hotel with great efficiency, dispatch, and little upheaval.

Miss Leah treated everyone who worked for her with unfailing politeness and good will. Once in awhile, when the work of a maid or a houseboy fell short of her expectations she would reprimand them like an irritated school teacher, and that usually did the trick. I have never met anyone who knew her who does not remember her fondly. The linen room where she presided was on an upper floor of the main building. It was always a busy place, with the complex tallying of what rooms

needed what done with them, and lots of folding and stacking of linens.

The atmosphere in the Housekeeping room was cordial, and the good-natured older ladies who worked there with Miss Leah always treated us in a jocular way. They all took an interest in our adventures, and occasionally they would fare forth to have some themselves.

One woman had a harrowing experience on a horseback trip up to Iceberg Lake. There was an unruly dude, or child, who kept making the horses nervous, and some of the animals in the train got out of control temporarily. The lady from housekeeping fell off her horse and landed on the trail in the middle of the turmoil. The next day she described what had happened, in strict confidence because she did not want the saddle company people to suffer any bad consequences from the incident. She had fallen under the horses and for a moment thought everything was over for her as she saw the hoof of a spooked horse coming right down toward her face. Either it just grazed her or missed altogether. In any case, she was back to work the next day only a bit worse for wear.

I do not remember how we housemen were trained up to our job, but it certainly was a simple one. The tasks of the maids were more complicated, and there was more chance that things would go wrong with their work. Two houseboys were assigned to the Annex, and I was one of them both the years I had the job. I think there were usually four

for the main part of the hotel. The other houseboys I remember best were Tom Westbrook, Bede Clapp, Tyke Powers, Hugh Langevin, Doug George, and of course, my brother Phil.

We all checked in at the linen room first thing in the morning to get instructions and then went off to do our rather simple tasks, chiefly involving the large volume of linens. These were hauled up from the laundry in big hampers to be sorted, refolded if necessary, and distributed. We took heavy hampers of sheets, towels, and pillowcases to the various parts of the hotel where they could be used as necessary by the maids. Whether there were linen closets for this purpose on the various floors I no longer recall.

As the maids went from room to room in the morning, they soon accumulated large heaps of rumpled linens and threw them down the chutes where we housemen piled them into hampers and transported them all the way around the rough service road to the laundry. In stormy and fair weather we pushed them in two-wheeled laundry carts, and often gave one another bumpy rides on the tops of the little mountains of linens. So it went during the morning and part of the afternoon until all the linens in the rooms were changed.

In the Annex we occasionally used a truly dangerous big rope pulley elevator which was like a large dumb waiter. (Now it is sealed shut.) Too

much weight loaded on it would throw it out of control and plunge everything and everyone on it helter-skelter down to a crashing stop on the lowest floor, since the only brake was the strength of one's grip on its pulley rope, which quickly could burn one's palms with friction. Sometimes Fred Knowlton, the head engineer, had to climb precariously up to the top of the shaft in order to get the rope and the cables for the counterweights back in place over the pulleys. The doors of this elevator had no safety locks, and it has always been a wonder to me why a tipsy or confused guest never plummeted down the shaft by accident.

In between sorties to and from the laundry we got out the big oiled floor mops and undertook the patently futile process of mopping the dust from the painted wood floors exposed on either side of the long sisal runners in the halls. The service closets where we stored the mops and disposed of the dust smelled oily and garbagey. It was an odor unique to those places. The houseboys must have had something to do with disposing of the accumulation of trash from the rooms, but it was such a simple job I do not remember a thing about it.

At some time during the morning we cleaned out the public lavatories and replaced the paper amenities there. It was a job to be done, and we found effective ways to do it without any fuss. We became expert at wielding the long-handled brushes and the plunger, polishing up chrome and enamel fixtures and mirrors, and mopping the washroom floors. Sugar tongs were useful for unfortunately disposed of cigarette butts in the men's rooms.

Usually the guests in this kind of hotel did not make the job too unpleasant, although I had a moment of resentment toward the man who first fastidiously put a plug into a sink and then became sick into it. The worst part of it was that the plug had no chain on it. But even such a challenge can be handled with a little ingenuity. Other remarkable circumstances were sometimes discovered, but it was all in a day's work. Like the doctor in his much more genteel profession, we quickly learned to take the less aesthetic parts of our washroom attendants' work as a routine part of perfectly honorable daily duties.

There was never any great rush about the houseboys' job that I remember. We spent a good deal of time sprawled on piles of linens talking and joshing, sometimes helping the maids clean out wastepaper bas-

relatively little to do directly with the guests, did not work intensively in close contact with others, and normally were not pressured by constant demands and deadlines in their tasks. It was inside work, largely insulated from the manager and the front office, subject to few inspections, and it was done by 12:00 noon or 1:30 or 2:00, depending on how many guests were in the hotel.

That work schedule was pure gold for those of us who liked to hike, because immediately after work we could take off on any of the many day hikes and climbs close to the hotel and be certain we would get back in time for the next day's work, even though it sometimes meant missing supper. Glacier is in the latitudes of the long summer daylight, lasting until 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock. This saved many a hike or scramble up a wilderness slope from becoming too

Miss Leah de Zouche, the Housekeeper, surely was the kindest and finest of the supervisors in the Park. She was a petite, white-haired woman, with glasses, dark eyes and brows, a gentle face, and a soft voice.

kets or distributing and dumping linens, and exchanging pleasantries with people we met as we wheeled the carts to and from the laundry. Around noon we would break for an unhurried lunch in the cafeteria, with all the socializing that came with it.

Of all the departments in the hotel Housekeeping enjoyed the most tranquil circumstances. Unlike the waiters, waitresses, room clerks, and reservations people, the employees in the housekeeping department had

nerve-wracking for lack of light.

Closing the Hotel, 1948

In 1948, the last year I was a houseboy, I stayed on after the hotel had closed to be part of the crew that put the place to bed for the long, fierce winter. This was a very pleasant, nostalgic time. The Indian summer weather, following an earlier cold cycle of frost and even snow, was gorgeous. Poplars, alders, and broad-leafed shrubs on the mountainsides had turned golden yellow, and there were patches of red and

orange among the greens and soft tans on the slopes.

The skies were a cobalt blue, and everything in view was more luminous than at any other time of the year. The lakes glistened more brightly. In the mornings and evenings the air was cold and bracing, and the light of day through a soft haze, added a lovely aura to the mountains, lakes, and forests, enhancing all the colors. The smell of smoke in the atmosphere gave me the cozy feeling associated with the warmth of fireplaces and wood stoves in forest cabins. In the late afternoons long shadows and muted colors in the valleys contrasted with the glorious displays of the fall sunsets.

Large herds of bighorn sheep came down to the base of Mt. Altyn in the fall from their remote summer ranges back in the mountains. The heavy-horned rams which had grazed in bachelor groups high on inaccessible cliffy meadows now joined the ewes and lambs in preparation for their jousting matches. They were all making for protected winter retreats. At the time I speculated, perhaps wrongly, that some were headed toward the well-defined game trail that would take them up along the base of the cliff on Mt. Allen to the isolation of Snow Moon and Falling Leaf Lakes. We had happened upon this Snow Moon trail in 1947 and have regularly followed it since then to the two high lakes in the lap of Mt. Altyn, passing the beautiful falls at their outlet which we had the effrontery to name after ourselves.

The bighorns faced a nervous passage over the bridge that spanned Swift-current Falls down by the Bellhops' Chalet. They would gather in herds of up to fifty or sixty north of the

falls and mill about for a long time before twos and threes of the courageous ones would clatter across the bridge and break free at a gallop across the low cream-colored shoulder of Altyn limestone rising just behind the hotel. It was a magnificent sight to see formation after formation of the great rams with their massive horns held high running across the long ridge of limestone, silhouetted against the blue sky.

After a season of ceaseless bustle and activity the hotel and all around it stood silent and deserted. The tranquil and vacant place suddenly belonged entirely to the lucky few of us who had stayed on. Quiet reigned outside as well, broken only rarely by the sound of a maintenance truck. The isolated sounds of our voices and our small operations echoed in the lifeless Lobby and halls. Our crew shared a cheerful mood of intimacy as we worked to store furnishings, beds, linens, blankets, bear pelts, and other decorations in various places in the hotel. After we left, the windows were boarded up and sealed against the winter. We were kept very busy every day, but I cannot recall just exactly what we did, only the strangeness and the tranquil, expectant mood of the place. When I was walking alone in the empty hotel I actually seemed to feel the presence of "a host of phantom listeners" like those in Walter de la Mare's poem.

The evenings were especially memorable for the crew who were closing the place. We all ate a supper of delicious dining room food together. Then we would gather around a fire crackling in the great rock fireplace in the Lobby and talk quietly as the night air outside grew more and more frigid. Mrs. Rhody or one of

the other cooks brought out delicious pastries and steaming coffee. It was a quiet party, of sorts, and the hotel looked more beautiful to me then than at any other time I can recall.

We had already had a taste of what winter was like in the Park with the blizzard of July 28th of 1948, as a result of which people all over Glacier, including four of us trapped at Lake McDonald, were snowbound for a day or two. When it cleared up, the snow-covered mountains were spectacularly beautiful, whiter even than they had been when we first arrived at the beginning of the season before the great melts.

Although several of us talked occasionally of returning to see what Many looked like in the winter, only Doug George made it back to visit the caretakers one December or January. For part of the winter the road to Babb was closed by deep snow, and the only way out was by skis, snowshoes, and later by snow cat and snowmobile. The weather was ferocious, with howling blizzards building up immense drifts that covered the chalets and sometimes a good share of the hotel.

During one of the winters a bear somehow broke in, and, I think it was reported, settled down to hibernate and give birth to cubs. Whatever the exact circumstances were, it left a horrendous mess to be cleaned up before the hotel opened. According to people who spend most of the year in the area, there are few good days during the winter in the Park. The sun rarely comes out. When that happens, however, it is incredibly beautiful, as many photographs by Mel Ruder and Brian Kennedy show.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Glacier Park Foundation's Board of Directors will meet on Sunday, June 23, at 2:00 PM, at the offices of Strobel and Hanson, 502 2nd St., #301, Hudson, Wisconsin 54016. Members of the Foundation are welcome to attend the meeting.

Thanks to our generous donors!

The Glacier Park Foundation gratefully thanks the generous donors who've recently contributed funds beyond their membership dues. GPF remains an all-volunteer effort. We deeply appreciate the extra contributions which help fund our projects and our publications.

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Freddie's Big Adventure

Wooing a Gearjammer in 1938

By Ray Djuff (*Prince of Wales* (1973-75, '78)

Fredella McDougall wanted to shake up her life. She was 25, working as a sales clerk at the Harold's womens-wear department store in Minneapolis. She felt the world was passing her by.

McDougall had already been through a lot. By age 20 she had lost both her parents. On her own in the depths of the Depression, she was forced to grow up fast. This made her more mature than her friends and co-workers, but being responsible was boring. She wanted a change. She craved the adventure she felt she had missed due to circumstances beyond her control.

On a lark, McDougall applied for a concession job in Glacier Park. She was hired to work at the gift shop at Many Glacier Hotel for the summer of 1938. Being responsible, she got her boss at the Harold's store to agree to give her the summer off, with the promise of her old job back when she returned on September 1.

McDougall's co-workers embraced her moxie and also kidded her about venturing so far away to "nail your man." They showered Freddie, as everyone called her, with little going-away presents, including a scribbler in which to record her adventures – "both good and bad things." McDougall did, using it as her diary. It is a unique record of a summer romance with a gearjammer, provid-

ing a woman's perspective. This story is based on her diary entries.

McDougall arrived at Glacier Park Station on May 31, following an overnight train ride from Minnesota. She spent the next week at Glacier Park Hotel sorting and pricing gift shop merchandize with other clerks before they were sent to their destination hotels. McDougall quickly discovered she was quite a bit older than her co-workers, most of whom were college and university students between the ages of 18 and 20. She referred to them as "the kids," being careful not to reveal her own age or lack of higher education.

"June 6: We are all thru [sic] with our work here and tomorrow morning we leave for our summer home – Many Glacier. ... After a busy Saturday [at work] came the big dance at Mike's Place. As it turned out, there were very few at the dance, but we had a good time. Jack proved very entertaining and a pretty good dancer. He really is swell and I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

McDougall rode a red bus to Many Glacier Hotel, her home for the next three months. She got a room in the employee dorm, shared with her co-workers Ginny, Mary Louise and Hodge (Hodgie). The gift shop at Many Glacier where she would be a "cigarette wrangler" was at the south end of the lobby, to the left of the main doors as you entered the building. It consisted of a long glass display case



Freddie McDougall

showing various items and behind it a wall of shelving with additional displays of trinkets and confections.

A few yards from the gift shop and closer to the lobby doors was the transportation desk, manned by local agent Sid Couch. He controlled the flow of bus traffic in and out of the hotel, and all the gearjammers reported to him for their daily assignments. Staff working at the gift shop and the transportation desk had a commanding view of the lobby, "where we can see everything, which suits us," McDougall said.

Just in front of the gift shop was a set of spiral stairs leading to the lake level of the hotel. The lake level is actually the basement, but since the hotel is built on a slope by Swiftcurrent Lake, guests can walk out the basement doors to the lake shore. The double-helix staircase also provided access to a soda fountain and bar on the lake level that was dubbed "the Grill." A small orchestra played there nightly, except on Sundays, and hotel patrons and staff could dance and drink. McDougall attend-



Sid Couch



The gift shop at Many Glacier Hotel dominated the south wall of the lobby and was beside the transportation deck.

ed the opening of the Grill and had a second encounter with Jack, the gearjammer she'd met at the dance at Mike's Place.

“June 17: The orchestra arrived yesterday and shortly afterward Jack Hammond brought in some dudes and came in and asked me to go ‘grilling’ in the evening. I had to work until 10 and we went down then and had a great time.”

Jack Hammond was working his third summer in Glacier. Due to the Depression, the 23-year-old had to forego his studies at the University of Nebraska and take a job as a driver to support himself. Following her second meeting with Hammond, McDougall quickly learned of an unwritten rule about the park dating scene.

“I found out that going to a dance here with a gearjammer puts one on the wrong side of the fence as far as the rest of the [hotel] boys are concerned. As a result, they let me alone – plenty. So I'm a little worried as to how it will all work out. The gearjammers have their own dorm and cook and the feeling between

them and the other boys isn't exactly friendly. Seems very stupid to me. I'll probably sit the rest of the summer as I can't see why Jack would devote all his time to me. ‘Howsomever,’ he was darned nice and I still like him.”

McDougall wasn't exclusive in her dating and although she thought she'd be overlooked by the male hotel staff for having gone out with a gearjammer, that didn't prove the case. Her days off were busy taking hikes with newfound friends such as Rosemary (Rum) Cashman. Her evenings were spent “grilling,” attending steak fries and bonfires, and sitting on the hill east of the hotel talking and star-gazing.

“June 28: Either this country really has something or I'm in my dotage. Darned if I can figure it out. I've had so much fun since I last wrote that finding time to do this scribbling is really a problem. ... I worked and went to the Grill after and had a circus with some new gearjammers who are perfect fools. Bill Campbell and Curtis Yeary. They took Hodge and I home.”

Being so close to the transportation

desk, McDougall had daily opportunities to talk to Sid Couch. She quizzed him about Jack Hammond, in whom she was taking greater interest.

“June 23: I found out from Sid Couch, who is swell and the transport agent here, that Jack is 23 or 24. Ain't that something?” Finding someone she might become serious about who was near her age was important to her.

“June 28: After coming back from our hike I went down to the hydro plant to see Dick Parsons. The more I see of that funny boy the more I like him—but he's only 23. ... He seems older tho [sic] and has a fine mind. We have had grand times together and he says the darnedest things. He told me once that I would ‘really be something’ if I had brown eyes.”

McDougall had several dates with Parsons, from Chicago, who was spending his third summer at Glacier, but it all went sideways when he kissed her one evening on a stroll.

“July 8: [Parsons] said then that he

guessed that [kiss] wouldn't spoil things and a few minutes later, 'Well, I guess that didn't thrill you to the core and it didn't me either. Let's go home.' That boy really has me buffaloed. I can't figure him out and yet he fascinates me completely. He bosses me so and I take it. He has the ability of lifting me way, way up and then deflating me in one moment. He's a new one on me and it's got to me. After that night I scarcely saw him for about four days and like a sap, it bothered me."

McDougall's spirits were lifted when Couch told her a day or so later that Jack Hammond was coming with a bus full of tourists. It had been almost two weeks since they'd last seen each other.

"July 8: I had to work that night till 10 and Jack and I went to the Grill after and for a short walk later. He had it all figured out how old I am and, much to my sorrow, he hit the nail on the head. Darn this being so old anyway. The conversation seemed to lag after that somehow and I shouldn't be surprised if he doesn't even ask me out when he next comes. So much for that. Hi, Ho!" Freddie McDougall didn't let that get her down. She continued her social activities.

"July 23: Now for Curt [Yeary]. He is a gearjammer who hails from Oklahoma, 22 years old and a senior medic next year. He is darling looking and talks so cute. Anyway, he took me home from the Grill one night long ago and since then has asked me for dates several times, but I've always been busy. ... He was most anxious to make a date for the next time he came – that is if Hammond wasn't in – he is so funny

about Jack."

Meanwhile, "Jack came the next day or two and Sid called me for Jack (Bless you, Sid!) and Jack asked me to go fishing with him and Julius Boettner, a senior medic at Minn. [sic] We had such a good time." Hammond's interest in McDougall was growing.

"July 23: Jack is so sweet and tells me he spends much time trying to figure me out. He has written me a couple of letters asking for dates. He seems to like me quite a bit, but is very bashful or something. Anyway, I've been out with [him] about eight times now and he has never tried to kiss me – and heaven only knows this place reeks with opportunity. The nights have been so beautiful and this is such a dangerously romantic spot."

While Curt Yeary knew of Jack Hammond's interest in Freddie McDougall, Yeary had no issues about going out with her when Hammond wasn't around as no one had yet deemed the relationship exclusive.

"July 8: Curt has been here a lot and I have fun with him. He tells me last night Jack thinks I'm 'tops.' Why doesn't Jack speak for himself? ... Curt came the following day and left a message asking for a date at the newsstand, had Sid call me, had Bill Campbell, his pal, come in and sent a message with another gearjammer. He was really trying to fix things up."

Curt Yeary finally got a double date with McDougall, her co-worker Hodge and Yeary's fellow jammer Bill Campbell. After a time at the Grill, they sat wrapped in blankets on the hill east of the hotel and stargazed.



Jack Hammond couldn't afford university during the Depression and quit his studies to drive bus no. 96.

"The breeze was so soft and warm and Curt was so darned sweet he really killed me. He asked me if I thought I could ever like him and when I said I already did. He said he meant more than like him. I didn't answer. He calls me the funniest cutest names, Little Miss Independence Personified, for one. ... He is perfectly lovable; I can't resist him. Ye gads, this place."

It took until the end of July before Jack Hammond and Freddie McDougall shared their first kiss.

"Jack came in later. He met me at 5:00 and we took a quick walk around Swiftcurrent [Lake] before dinner. I was supposed to work until 10:30 but Mary Lou worked for me so Jack and I went 'grilling' and had a good time and lots of dances together. It was a bit cold. We sat up on the rocks on the hill till almost 2:30 [a.m.] ... He is so sweet and sincere – doesn't talk like Curt can. I

can't help but compare them. Curt's line is incomparable, but I don't have to take Jack's with a grain of salt – but I like 'em both. Jack wants to come down to Minn[eapolis]. For the Nebraska [football] game and I think that would be perfect. He kissed me Monday nite [sic] and was so shy about it." A few dates, hikes and a week or so later, Hammond popped a surprise on McDougall. **"Aug. 6:** I had Thursday morning off and Jack came in . . . and decided to go 'grilling' after work. We had so much fun . . . Jack got blankets and we went up on the hill – and from here on I don't know what to write. He told me that he more than liked me – that he knew he was in love with me – that he had known it for two weeks and wanted to tell me and wouldn't wait any longer. It was such a shock to me. I didn't know what to do or say. I knew he did care for me but truly had no idea it was so serious. As for myself, I've tried to not care too much for Jack because he is younger than I and the setting is so perfect for romance. He says he has given it so much thought and that he can't argue himself out of it. He has been here three summers and this has never happened to him before. Every word he said was so sincere and dear. He made it all so right and perfect. . . .

"Then came the real shock. Jack asked me if I wanted his pin. To me it was such a tremendous thing – being in love with me was one thing and asking me to wear his pin – quite another. Not to Jack. To him it's all the same thing. He told me his pin meant a great deal to him and that was how he felt about me. I couldn't take it, yet – I'm afraid – and I've got to be so very, very sure. He said he wouldn't urge me any

more – that if he hadn't convinced me yet he would just have to wait. But he asked me to please tell him as soon as I could. The fact that I'm two years older than he worries me so, but he thinks that is ridiculous." [At the beginning of the season each gearjammer was given an oval pin with the Glacier Park Transport Company logo on it and a number, which was each driver's designation. Drivers usually wore their pins on their jackets or attached to their belts. "Pinning" indicated the recipient was exclusively dating a particular driver with the intention they would, at some point, likely marry. It wasn't quite a proposal, but one step below.]

Jack Hammond's offer of his pin had McDougall's mind reeling. "I have been in a daze since Thursday night and have felt differently than I ever have before. He is so fine and good and I think I'll quit being afraid and take his pin. It all seems too good to be true – so perfect and story-bookish – but it has happened before."

McDougall's time in Glacier was quickly coming to an end as Sept. 1st neared – until newsstand manager James Ridler asked her to stay two more weeks and transfer to Lake McDonald Hotel. McDougall wrote and received permission from her boss at Harold's department store to delay her return.

"Aug. 16: Jack came Wednesday but didn't get to come in to see me till about 1:30 [p.m.], so I thought he hadn't come and I was so terribly disappointed it was amazing. . . . I was waiting on two ladies for jewelry when I saw him coming and I jumped about a foot and walked right off from the ladies. Gosh, I was excited. He came down at five and

we went for a little walk. I worked at night and we went to the Grill for a while and then went up to the gearjammers dorm to get Jack's jacket, which he had left on the fender of the old bus. It wasn't there but a note in its place – all in all there were four notes telling us to look for further instructions. Some of the boys playing cute tricks. We laughed ourselves sick and finally found the jacket and blankets and went up a new hill.

"It was a nice night and we talked and talked. I explained to Jack that I couldn't take his pin yet – that I was beyond the 'school informal engagement stage.' He was a little hurt at first, I think, but soon understood my point of view. Since then, at times I've been sorry I didn't take the pin – and let us take our chances, but mostly I feel I'm doing the right thing. Time will tell."

McDougall soon changed her mind. **"Sept. 4:** Jack came in and I worked in the evening. It wasn't a very nice night so I went in and put on my old, old purple sweater over my dress and we went up to sit in 96 [Jack's bus]. It was in the garage or something so we sat in 98 and before long we were talking again about me taking his pin. I told him I was afraid that if I did take it and something happened, we would both feel that worse than ever. He said he fully realized that, but felt so sure of himself that he was willing and anxious to take that chance if I was – I was! So Jack hung his pin and never a dearer, sweet boy have I seen. We were both pretty thrilled and happy. Jack had a cold tho [sic] so we came home pretty early. I immediately woke Ginny from a sound sleep and finally got it thru [sic] her head, woke up Hodge and Mary Lou – they weren't surprised, of course."

After a stint at Lake McDonald Hotel, Freddie left Glacier on Sept. 15 with Jack at the train station to see her off. She returned to work at Harold's store and showed off her pin to her co-workers, causing a stir. Jack soon followed her to Minneapolis for a visit, and to meet Freddie's friends.

Jack and Freddie were wed in November 1939 in his hometown of Fremont, Nebraska. They remained married until her death in 2001. Jack survived her by just a few months and died on what would have been their 62nd anniversary.

All diary excerpts are used with the permission of McDougall's daughter, Sioux Douglas.



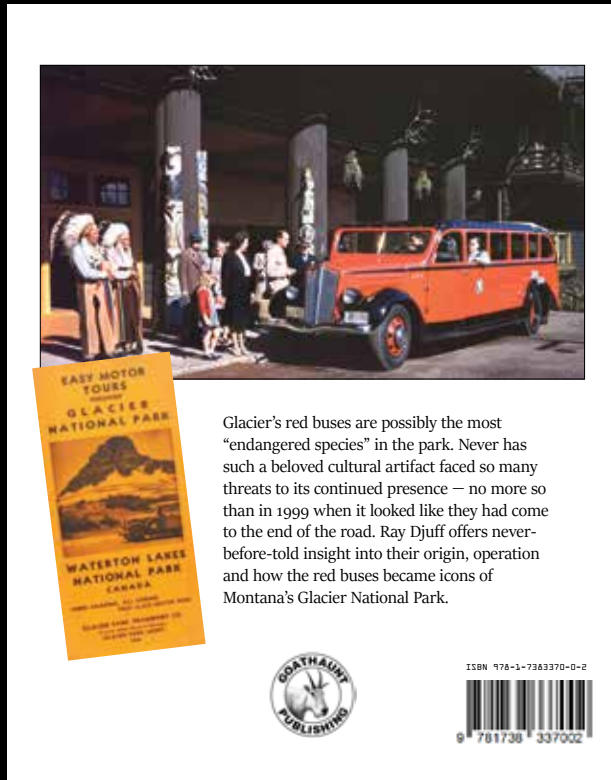
A Glorious New History of Glacier's Reds

Ray Djuff, the leading historian of Glacier National Park, has just published a remarkable book called *Glacier's Reds: The Quest to Save the Park's Historic Buses*. It tells the story of Glacier's red buses and their "gearjammer" drivers in glorious detail, with more than 300 photographs and a profusion of colorful stories. Djuff tells the tale of transportation in Glacier from its origins with horse-drawn stages, through the first generations of creaky jalopies that blew out their tires on the park's rough roads,

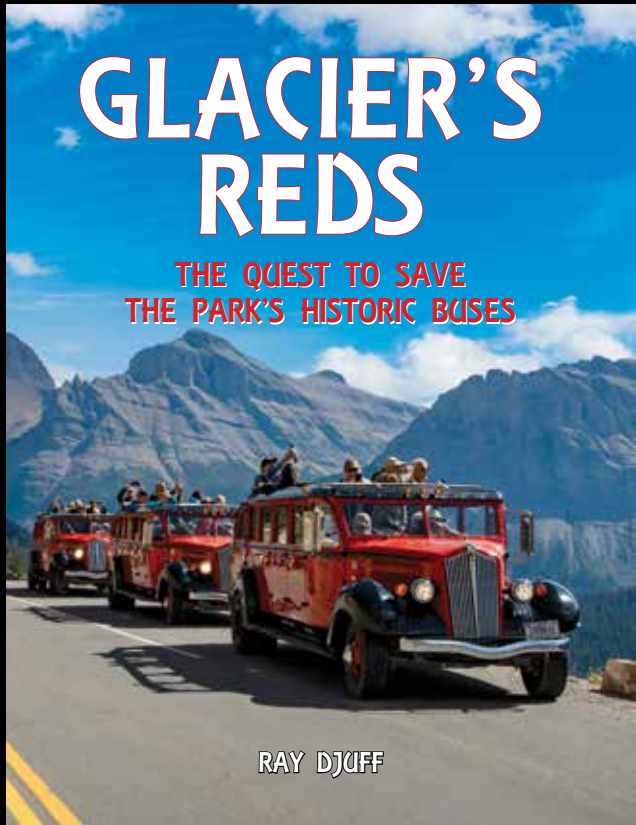
through the epic construction of Going-to-the-Sun Highway and the purchase of the present red buses in 1936-39. He tells the story of Howard Hays, who ran the Glacier Park Transport Company for decades and created the famous *Drivers' Manual*. He tells of the gearjammers' role in evacuating Many Glacier Hotel and fighting the great fire that nearly destroyed it in 1936. And he tells how the public rallied to save the red bus fleet when it might have been junked in 1999 and in 2013.

Look for a comprehensive review of *Glacier's Reds* in the next issue of *The Inside Trail*! The book has a suggested retail price of \$29.95. It can be ordered from Amazon.com, is available from Barnes & Noble, and should be available by order through most other bookstores. Any lover of Glacier is likely to spend hours engrossed in the book, marveling at the photos and drinking in the delightful stories!

(See the Back cover, page 28.)



Glacier's red buses are possibly the most "endangered species" in the park. Never has such a beloved cultural artifact faced so many threats to its continued presence — no more so than in 1999 when it looked like they had come to the end of the road. Ray Djuff offers never-before-told insight into their origin, operation and how the red buses became icons of Montana's Glacier National Park.



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JOIN THE GLACIER PARK FOUNDATION

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 15241, 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.

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