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OLD MAN OF THE HILLS

BY JOHN LAMBING



CONDON CREEK



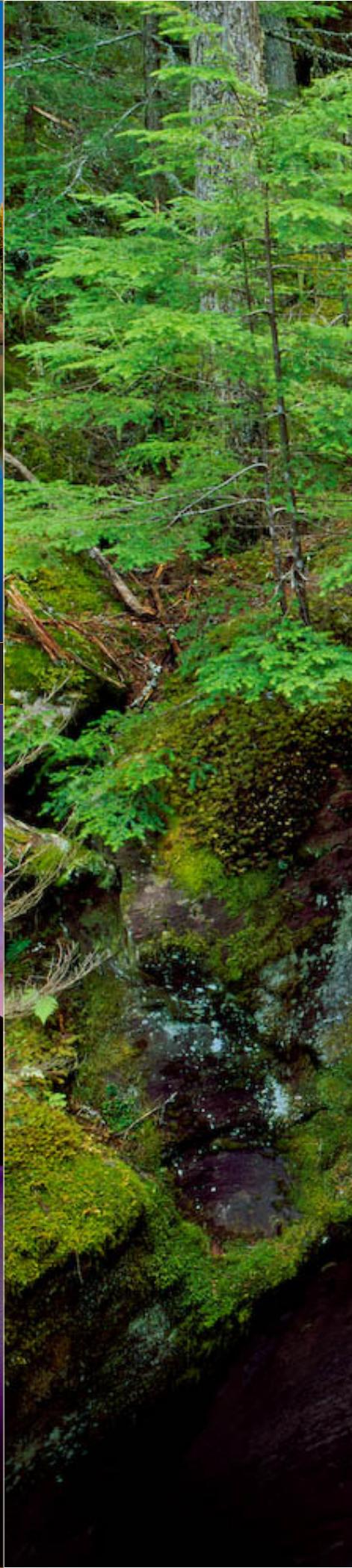
EAR MOUNTAIN



FLATHEAD LAKE
BALSOMROOT



HOLLAND LAKE



ST. MARY LAKE







CRACKER PEAKS



SPLIT ROCK

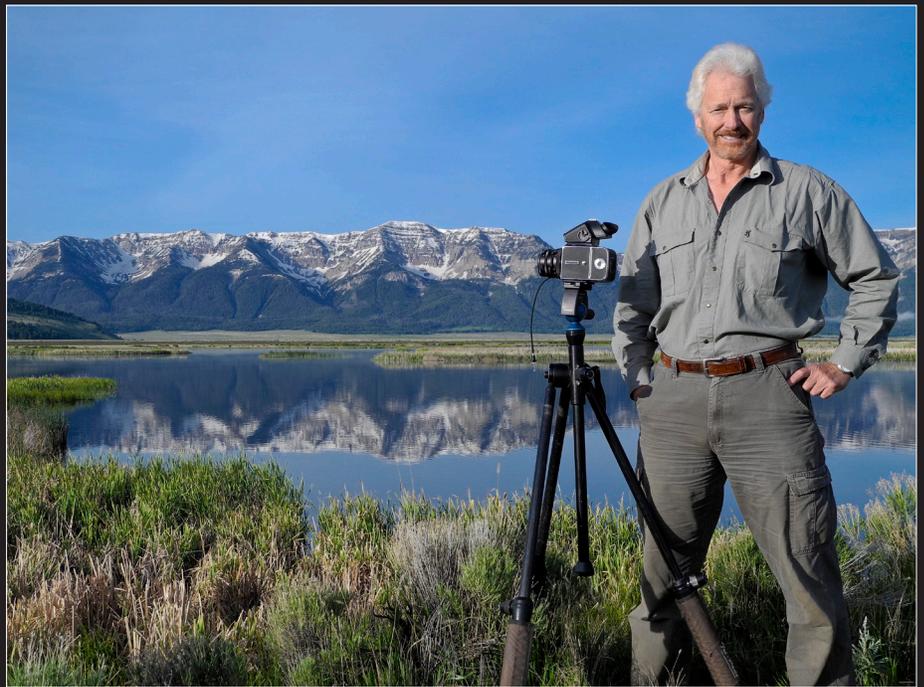


WHEAT ON THE FRONT





GARDEN WALL GLACIER



CENNTENNIAL VALLEY

JOHN LAMBING

For the second time we are featuring the work of photographer John Lambing of Helena, Montana. He was first highlighted in our Winter 2009-2010 issue. John conducted water quality studies as a U.S. Geological survey hydrologist until his retirement in 2009. Since moving to Montana in 1981, he has photographed almost every corner of the state. In 1990, he began using a Hasselblad medium-format film camera that he continues to use to this day. To keep up with publishers' demands, he is now digitizing all of his photography.

Lambing's work has appeared in several magazines and conservation-oriented publications. His images also are showcased in several Montana photography books published by Far Country Press of Helena.

To request prints of the photos appearing in this E-magazine or for special requests and projects, e-mail John at jlambing@bresnan.net.

An Investor's visit to

By Kim Briggeman
of the *Missoulian*



o the Mission Valley

September
1883



The Mission Mts and Mission valley south of Ronan - Will Klaczynski photo

Once you top Ravalli Hill on U.S. Highway 93 and break into the Mission Valley, you know exactly what Henry Villard was thinking in 1883.

One day after the Northern Pacific's extravagant Golden Spike ceremony west of Garrison, the president of the just-completed railroad was showing off the West to investors from the East and Europe.

A motley caravan of wagons and buggies set out for McDonald Lake on Post Creek the Sunday morning of Sept. 9 from the new train station at Ravalli. They carried between 200 and 300 moneyed and powerful men.

Villard "possessed all the talents of a successful showman," Missoulian editor Arthur L. Stone wrote years later. The railroad president had arranged this side excursion to provide his guests with an eye-popping experience. "Nowhere in the world is there a sight so dramatically impressive and so impellingly beautiful as the first glimpse which the traveler gets of the Mission Range and of the valley at its base, as he drives slowly up that little coulee back of Ravalli and breasts the crest of the hill and looks over upon the magnificent picture which is spread before him," Stone wrote in his Dec. 3, 1911, "Following Old Trails" column.

The tourists were headed to McDonald Lake, below the peak named for Angus McDonald. The Shakespeare-quoting Hudson's Bay Co. fur trader had finished building Fort Connah north of St. Ignatius in 1847, two years

before his son Duncan was born there to his Nez Perce wife, Catherine.

The railroad enlisted Duncan McDonald and his teenage brother, Angus Colville McDonald, as guides. Angus left earlier with some of the more fit greenhorns for a drive and hike to McDonald Peak, on a road Villard had constructed up the steep slopes just for the occasion.

"I had to stay for the old ones, the fat ones and the English lords to get ready," McDonald recounted to Stone.

They all were due back by 4 p.m., when Villard, his wife and four children, and others, including former President Ulysses S. Grant, would be waiting to resume the train trip West. They made it, a feat that's hard to fathom these days. "I would think it was at least a three-hour wagon ride, say an hour at the lake, and then three hours back," Joe McDonald said last week. "That's seven hours.

"Then again, we think of buggies being so slow, but when you read the history of the (St. Ignatius) Mission, priests are running back and forth to Missoula in buggies in a day all the time."

Joe McDonald, who retired in 2010 as president of the Salish Kootenai College he helped found 1976, will turn 80 next spring.

He was a small boy when Duncan McDonald died in 1937, a passing marked in the Daily Missoulian by a front-page story that hailed him as the state's oldest pioneer. Joe remembers his great-uncle as "a tall, slim, fairly frail guy" who lived at Dixon in his later years.

To Stone, Duncan McDonald was a treasure trove of information and a man railroad surveyors relied upon to show them the best way through the Flathead Reservation. "They had learned to depend upon this man, more Scotch than Indian by breeding but much more Indian than



John McDonald helped build an irrigation dam in 1920 on the lake the party had traveled to – Lake McDonald is in the background - Kurt Wilson, Missoulian photo



McDonald Peak, at 9,820' is the highest summit in the Mission Mts. and rises above McDonald Lake – Rick and Susie Graetz photo

Scotch by inclination and sympathy,” Stone wrote.

McDonald rode his horse ahead that day, the wagons stringing out behind him from the Ravalli station. “It was the greatest thing I ever saw. There was never anything like it, I guess,” he told Stone with a laugh.

McDonald spoke with particular mirth of an accident that befell the lead wagon as the expedition dropped into the valley. The wagon carried three passengers. On the back seat were U.S. Sen. George Edmunds of Vermont (for whom Edmonds, Wash., was named) and a Lord Norwood of England. Up front was a “little, mean chap” from New York, who spent the trip up the hill lambasting McDonald for the dust his horse was kicking up.

Cattle had been wallowing in some of the low, wet places toward the mission, McDonald said, and at one point the team pulling the lead wagon gave a jump to get it through a particularly soft slough.

“The sudden yank threw the back seat with its two occupants right over backward into that soft mud,” McDonald told Stone. “I heard a yell and turned back. It was the funniest sight I ever looked at.”

The seat’s back was in the mud, as were Edmunds and Norwood, on their backs with their feet in the air. They made no more effort to get out than a mired mule would make, said McDonald.

“Their friend from the front seat was doing a dance around them, shouting that they would be drowned, calling for help and accusing me of having arranged that spill on purpose,” McDonald said.

Maj. Peter Ronan, the Flathead agent, was driving the cart behind and barely avoided the scene of the accident. Other rigs followed, some of their passengers amused, some alarmed but none offering to help, said McDonald.

He helped the two men to their feet as the New Yorker spewed venom at him. The victims themselves handled the accident just fine, McDonald said.

By now he was behind the rest of the wagons. When he reached the mission, McDonald saw to his dismay that the Easterners were scattered all over the place. “They were examining the beadwork on the Indians’ clothes; they were guessing as to whether certain Indians were men or women and making bets on it; they were chasing butterflies; some were chasing the naked Indian babies that

were toddling about the grounds; others were investigating the old church and some were looking at the schools,” McDonald said.

He threatened to turn the expedition around right there if they didn’t get back on the road, and eventually they complied.

Wyman and cousin Joe McDonald are grandsons of Duncan McDonald’s brother Joe, who was seven years younger, married another Salish tribal member, Lucy Deschamps, and who died in 1944.

Now 74, Wyman grew up in St. Ignatius, the youngest of John and Lydia McDonald’s 13 children. He joined the Marines at age 17 and spent much of his life away from the reservation. He worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in various Western states and the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C.

Wyman was Gov. Marc Racicot’s coordinator of Indian affairs in Montana in the late 1990s, and returned to the reservation 10 years ago. He remembers hunting for

Christmas trees as a teenager on the road to McDonald Lake. But until he took a drive up there with a couple of newspapermen on a blustery day last week, it had been 40 or more years since he’d been to the lake.

It’s a reservoir now, backed up by a dam completed in 1920. Wyman said his father, born in 1891, helped with the construction. “He said they had 16-horse teams to build it. Must’ve been quite a bit of fun trying to handle 16 horses up here,” McDonald said.

Tucked between steep mountains to the north of McDonald Peak, the reservoir is still a fetching sight. The lake the tourists beheld in 1883 must’ve been spectacular. “The natural lake was much smaller than the reservoir, and there was a trail all the way around it,” Tom McDonald said. “In fact there were some old mining claims up above there, and a major cedar grove at the top of the lake.”

Tom McDonald is Joe’s son and the Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation manager for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Neither he nor the other McDonalds asked know where Villard



built his wagon road up to McDonald Peak, though Tom speculated the road passed by the lake before starting its steep climb.

Even in 1911 it was obscured with brush and timber, Stone said. There are trails to the peak up a couple of drainages, and Joe McDonald said he knows a man who used to hike to the top and back in a day.

The men of what Stone called “the Villard invasion” in 1883 didn’t spend much time pondering such mysteries. “We got to the lake all right,” Duncan McDonald reported. “The visitors were well pleased with a small look at the scenery and then demanded lunch.” Out from the wagons came “an ocean of champagne” and fried chicken, cake and fruit – what McDonald called “the greatest lunch that was ever spread in the Mission Valley.”

“It was a champagne crowd, all right,” he said, “and when they had taken one dip into the wine, the scenery looked better to them than it had before.”

They returned to Ravalli just in time, tired but without incident, and proceeded to dig into the next meal. “When I saw the way those fat old fellows went for the fried chicken and champagne, I understood why it was that they didn’t feel equal to the longer trip up the mountain,” McDonald said. “The ride they had was all they could stand.”

Brother Angus arrived with his group shortly after. Villard thanked the McDonalds and soon the Villard Gold Spike Excursion train headed west down the Jocko.

Stone pondered in 1911 how interesting it would be to take the same trip across the reservation with some of those who took part 28 years earlier. “They would find the grandeur of the mountains undimmed; they would see the same glory of sunset light on the immortal peaks of the Mission Range; they would discover the beauty of (McDonald) Lake unchanged; they would find the valley even more beautiful than it was when they saw it,” he wrote.

Stone clearly considered the reservation a thing of the past. It had been opened to homesteaders in 1910, an effort spearheaded by former U.S. Sen. Joseph Dixon, Stone’s boss as publisher of the *Missoulian*.

Now, he wrote, visitors would “find the farmer where they saw the Indian,” and they would “marvel at the wonderful development which has followed the invasion which they started and which was made possible by the construction of the (railroad) which their money built.”

He failed to note if Duncan McDonald shared the same sentiments.



Joe McDonald, retired Salish Kootenai College president, in St. Ignatius - Kurt Wilson, *Missoulian* photo

AN

INCREDIBLE

WILDERNESS

TREK

BY BOB COONEY

Editors' note: Bob Cooney of Helena passed on in January 2007 at the age of 97. He was the first Chief of Big Game Management for Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and was responsible for initiating a massive wildlife restoration program targeting decimated populations of elk, mountain sheep and goats, antelope, deer and bear. For his work he spent a great deal of time on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front and in the Bob Marshall Country and came to know many of the "old timers", among them Paul Hazel.



Paul Hazel, often referred to as ‘Pinnacle Paul,’ was well known by all who visited the North Fork Sun River country in today’s Bob Marshall Wilderness. Cooney told us that Paul hiked into the Sun River Mountains from his home north of Choteau in 1920 and stayed for nearly 60 years. During the summers he worked for the Forest Service constructing and maintaining trails, building field cabins, fighting fires and manning lookouts. His summer headquarters was the wilderness station at Gates Park on the North Fork of the Sun. His winters were spent as a caretaker of a remote dude ranch at the head of Gibson Lake on the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, many miles from the nearest road; he lived by himself. The following is an excerpt from an article Bob Cooney wrote describing an amazing trip Paul made through parts of the wilderness in the early 1930s. Paul Hazel was 90 years old when he died in 1979. This excerpt appeared in the book Montana’s Bob Marshall Country by Rick and Susie Graetz.

I am sure every mountain range has its stories of extraordinary hikes and I often think of one up along the Continental Divide in early December quite a while ago.

L. J. Howard, a forest ranger, and I were on elk patrol in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Paul Hazel, who had spent much of his life up there, was helping us. He was an exceptional hiker.

We had spent the night at a little cabin on Cabin Creek on the North Fork of the Sun River. Our plan was to cover the winter elk range on the North Fork up to Gates Park that day. Snow was still fairly light along the river, so we weren’t using snowshoes. Each of us planned to cover a different area and meet that evening at Gates Park.

We had no idea what sort of ordeal lay ahead for Paul as we parted that morning. He was to cross the river and go up Moose Creek several miles, check on any game, take snow-depth readings and head north through the timber to the Gates Park cabin.

L. J. and I got in to camp around dusk. There was no Paul. We waited to eat supper and still no Paul. He was a superb woodsman and knew the area intimately. We couldn’t imagine what might have happened. Much as we wanted to get out of there, we believed it would be best to wait till daylight to start a search for him.

It was well after midnight when the Forest phone jingled. The only line working at that time was one to the Spotted Bear Ranger Station way over on the South Fork of the Flathead River. It was Paul. He said he was calling from the old iron field phone up on the Continental Divide on Spotted Bear Pass.

He had found an unexpectedly large band of elk up Moose Creek. Tracks indicated they might have recently migrated across the Divide from the White River area. Paul thought it was essential to our work to verify this. So he headed on up Moose Creek. It was many miles to the Chinese Wall and the snow got deeper the higher he went. He found the snow so deep along the base of the Wall that he believed it would be better to get up on top to head north to the pass he wanted to check. He managed to work his way up through the steep little pass at the head of Moose Creek. It was getting dark up there on top. He found the wind had blown the crest fairly free of snow. There was no trail and he had no light, but he made his way several miles along the top of the Continental Divide to an elk migration trail just south of Larch Hill. To think about how he got down off that end of the Wall through the snow cornices makes me shudder. In the dim light of the stars he could make out by tracks that a large group of elk recently had crossed the pass from the west side of the Continental Divide. This was the information he had worked so hard to verify.

He then made his way through deep snow around the shoulder of Larch Hill and on to the field phone at Spotted Bear Pass. There were still many miles to go to our camp down Rock Creek through heavy timber and snow. On the phone we had suggested he find a sheltered place, build a fire and wait till daylight. We said we would head up that way to give him a hand by breaking trail.

We were just about to leave when we saw Paul come out of the timber across the meadow. The Gates Park cabin, in the first gray light of the morning with smoke drifting out of the chimney must have looked good to Paul. I know he looked mighty good to us.

L. J. and I tried to figure how far he had hiked that day and night. He had traveled up Moose Creek much of the way in the snow without snowshoes. He had searched his way in the dark with no light along the crest of the Chinese Wall on the Continental Divide. There was no trail and a thousand-foot drop off to the east. Then there were all those miles down Rock Creek. He had hiked through deep timber where it was so dark that here and there he had to feel for blazes on the trees to make sure he was still on the snow covered trail.

He must have hiked nearly 40 miles. Paul has always been a man of few words. His only reference to the difficulty of the trip was his comment after breakfast: “I guess maybe I’ll stay in today and wash some clothes.”

Settling the

BOB M

Editors' Note: The following article appeared in the book Montana's Bob Marshall Country by Rick and Susie Graetz and was excerpted from the U.S. Forest Service publication Early Days in the Forest Service – Region 1.

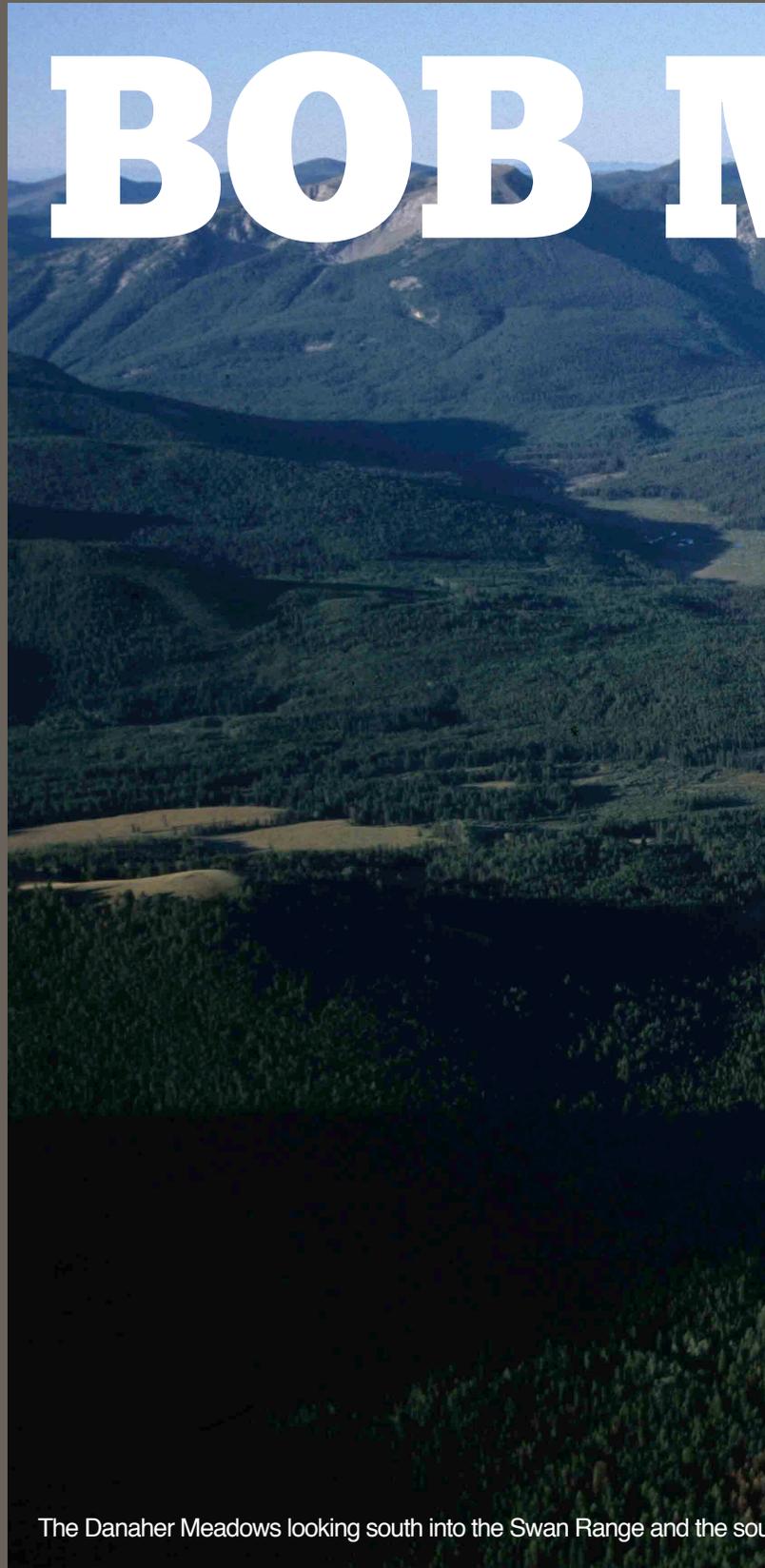
In 1899, H.B. Ayres, of the Division of Geography and Forestry of the Department of the Interior, made a survey of what was then the Lewis and Clark Reserve. While traveling in the North Fork of the Sun River, he mentioned that there was some grazing going on and a few cabins were visible. He also had the opportunity to travel in the Danaher Meadows area in the upper reaches of the South Fork of the Flathead.

Tom Danaher and A.P. McCrea, most likely the first white men to settle on the South Fork, homesteaded 160 acres each in 1898. They built several structures, including houses and barns and put in hay and grazed cattle and horses. Climate, poor yields of hay for their stock, as well as accessibility to the outside world caused McCrea to abandon his homestead and, in 1907, Danaher sold his land to the Hunt Club of Missoula. The Hunt Club had planned to raise horses on the ranch, but were affected by the same conditions as the two homesteaders. Sam O. Acuff eventually took over ownership. Later, the Forest Service bought him out.

The Ralston brothers at one time, tried to develop a coal mine somewhere along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. The attempt was unsuccessful.

There were other homesteads filed in what is now wilderness. In 1911, the Gates Park area was homesteaded and, in 1913, several other tracts in the Danaher were filed upon, but were not occupied. Climate conditions and perhaps the fires of 1910, which burned much of the present wilderness area, probably influenced the low interest.

In 1915, David H. Lewis, the District Ranger of the Big Prairie Ranger District compiled



The Danaher Meadows looking south into the Swan Range and the South Fork of the Flathead River.

an agriculture report on the Upper South Fork of the Flathead. In essence his report said that the combination of severe winters, a short growing season, a limited number of farming acres and the minimal chances of agricultural success should dictate that this land is not suitable for agricultural activities. He recommended that all lands south of Black Bear Creek be closed to entry under the Forest Homestead Act. He also pointed out that the area's fish and wildlife

MARSHALL

thern Bob Marshall Country. Homesteading attempts were made in the meadows.

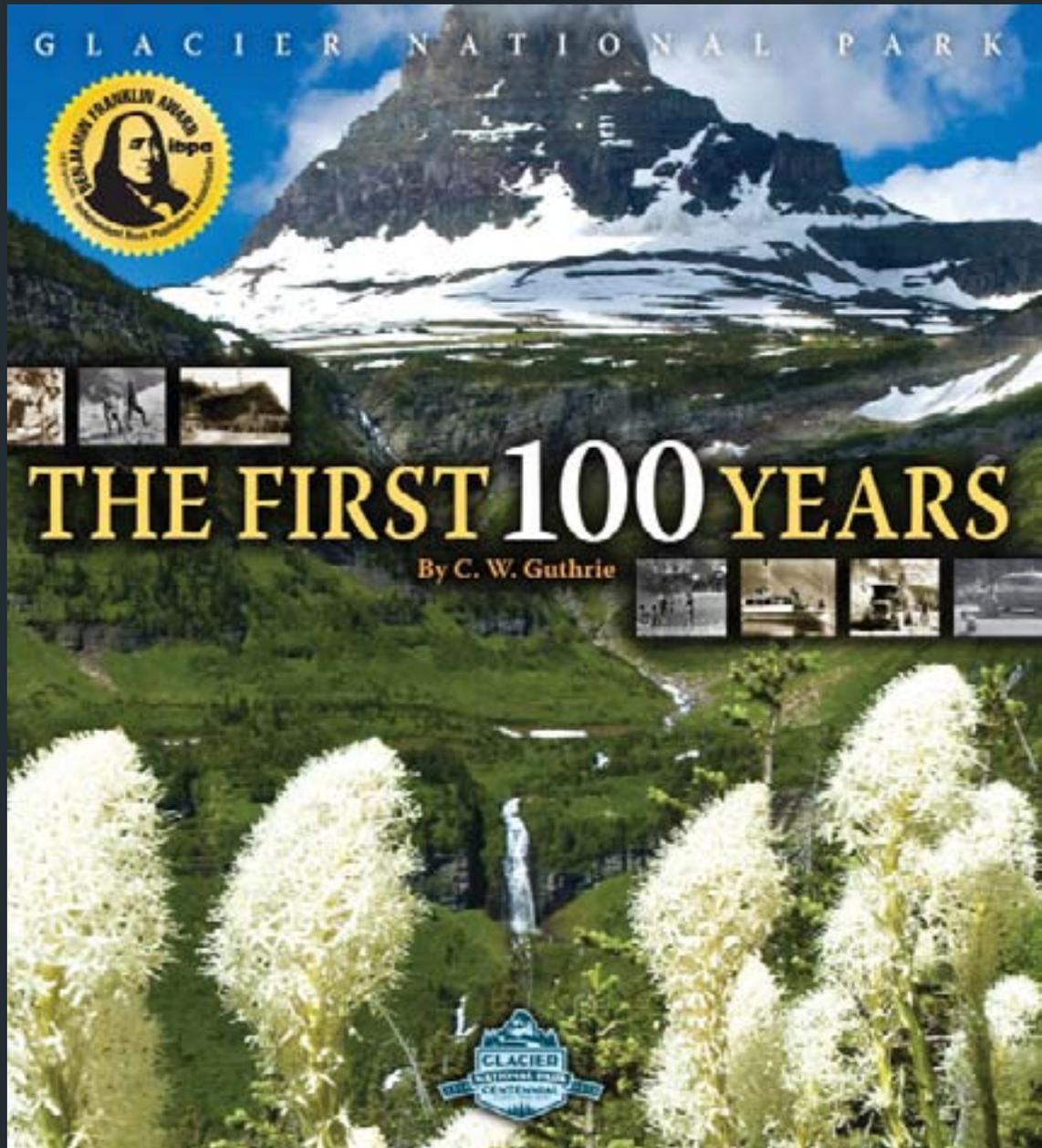
values would be jeopardized by settlement. He felt that the area was of greater importance for attracting hunters and fishermen.

Lewis also pointed out: “the present routes of travel are trails, where it is only possible to use saddle and pack horses. The distance from Corum, a Flag Station on the Great Northern Railway, to Black Bear is 70 miles, to White River 83 miles and to Big Prairie 91

miles. The distance from Ovando to the following localities is as follows: Danaher Creek 40 miles, Basin Creek 50 miles, White River 68 miles and Black Bear 81 miles. There are 15 miles of wagon road leading out from Ovando connecting with the trail to Danaher. The trails leading into this country from Corum and Ovando were constructed by the Forest Service and are very fair trails. They are the only routes of travel to the Upper South Fork.”

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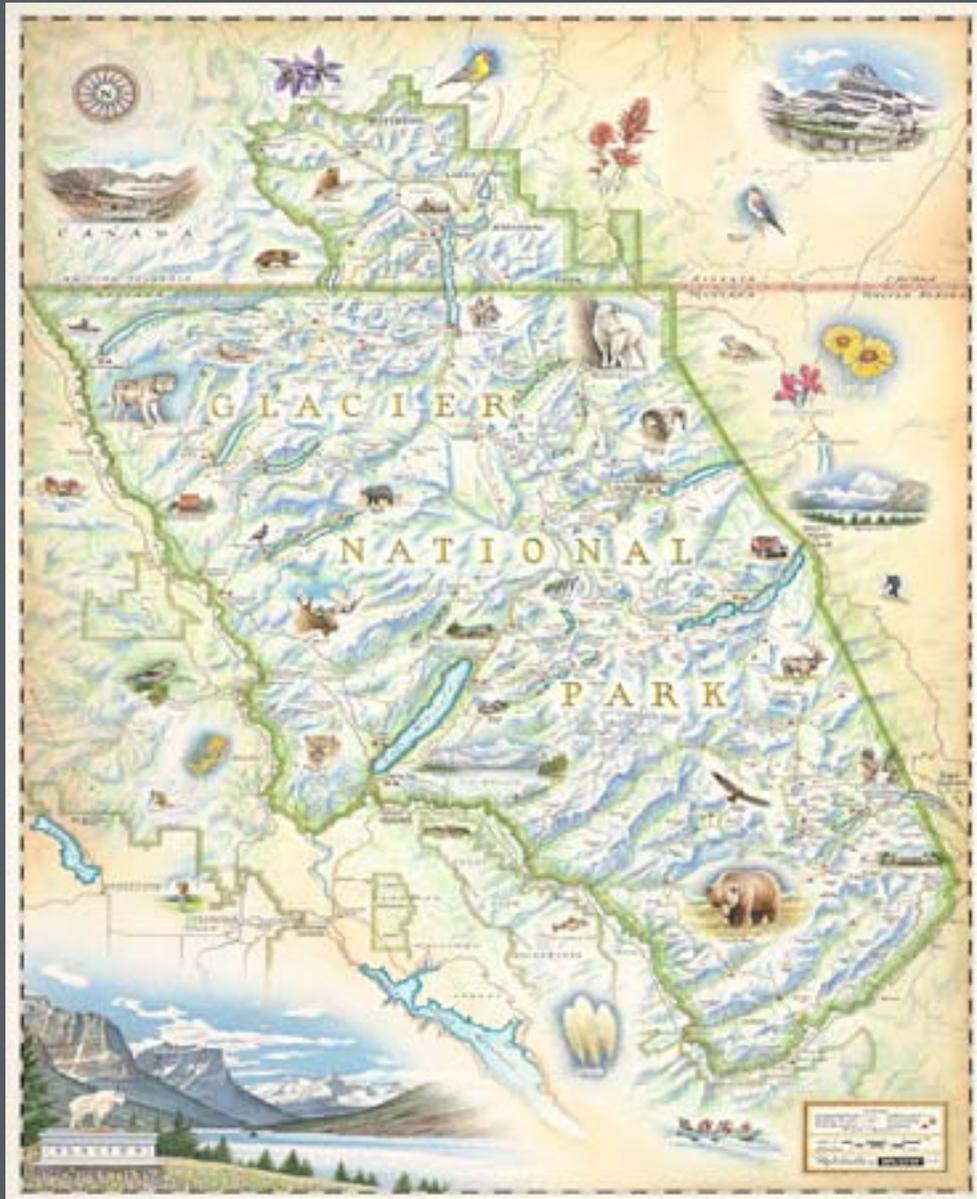
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Rick and Susie Graetz

REVISED EDITION

A Crown Review

By Jerry Fetz

There are many wonderful books about the Crown of the Continent, about individual aspects and pieces of the whole (see our bibliography on the UM Crown Initiative Website for titles), and about the whole Crown. Many of these books present a combination of informative texts and stunning photos, some leaning in the direction of text (with accompanying photos), others in the direction of photos (with accompanying text). Among those few books that do both offer their readers spectacular and evocative images and informative and inspiring text equally and equally well, the book at hand by Ralph Waldt, with the help of numerous, outstanding photographers, has become one of my two favorites among the more recently published works. The other is C.W. Guthrie's *Glacier National Park. The First 100 Years*. Helena, MT: Farcountry Press, 2008 (see the advertisement on p. 50). Yet, even these two books that share many features are quite different. Guthrie's book offers a wider sweep of this now over 100-year-old National Park, including information, photos, and other images that are both historical and contemporary, and images and discussion about what casual tourists and visitors might see and do there, as well as about the geological and natural aspects that draw tourists (and hikers, skiers, campers, and nature-lovers) to this spectacular national park.

Waldt's book, *Crown of the Continent*, also offers a broad sweep of the park in all of its seasons, its forests and valleys, its wealth of flowers and fauna, its spectacular mountainous peaks, and those features of the Rocky Mountain Front as well. Its focus is that of the naturalist, of a person whose attention is directed to the intricacies of the animal and plant life found in the park, on their behaviors through the various seasons, on their interactions with one another, and on their places and roles within the complex ecosystem where they live. As such, the naturalist Ralph Waldt is not especially interested in what tourists or casual visitors do or experience in Glacier National Park and nearby, but rather in what he and others like him have seen, done, and experienced over many years of walking, hiking, and snowshoeing in the wilder parts of the park and in the

seasons that are not generally accessible to motorized travel or to those who don't put on a backpack and head off to experience and observe. Yet, as the great Montana writer Ivan Doig points out in his Foreward, this "Waldtian work of prose and photo takes us, in the company of a guide honed by the country itself, to unsurpassed viewpoints of an eco-kingdom that most people have only seen bits and pieces of." Having grown up near Glacier National Park, hiking and exploring in a variety of ways already as a young teenager, and then living and working for many years in and just outside the park, yet still in the Crown, Waldt's knowledge and understanding of what he has seen and experienced is intimate, based on keen observations over many years as well as a solid grounding in biology as a science. And he's a great story teller and a great photographer.

What the reader (and lucky we are!) finds in this book are reports and stories from a gifted naturalist, writer, and photographer who sees both the barely visible details of plants and flowers and trees, and also understands just why they are all important in the larger ecosystem, but these reports and stories also from a wildlife biologist who is especially interested in the lives, habits, and interactions among the larger (and smaller) animals that are the icons of this special ecosystem. A marvelous photographer himself, whose pictures constitute a large and important part of the book, Waldt has also selected photos from numerous other photographers Doug Cox, Douglass Dye, Chuck Haney, Donald Jones, John Lambing, Michael Sample, and others to augment his own. And what a special collection of photographers and photos of the things, beings, and places that constitute the geological and natural essence of Glacier National Park and its close environs this book contains!

Arranged in five chapters, plus the excellent Foreward, Preface, and Afterword by three individuals whose own work in various genres have informed and inspired many of us who are interested in Montana and the Crown, Waldt opens his journals and photo albums from over thirty years of

intimate interactions with the Park and the nearby Front and invites us to tag along on a number of hikes and snowshoe outings into the backcountry, in all seasons, to glimpse and hear about the many wonderful things he has seen and experienced there. In the process we learn about reading “signs:” animal’s cat, claw marks on trees, paw marks in the snow or mud and experience the exciting sights of huge grizzlies and elk, of sneaky and rarely seen wolverines, fisher, and mountain lions, of beavers and snowshoe hares. His prose is straight-forward, yet poetic, invitingly descriptive and evocative of those (less frequent for most of us) times that we have had the privilege of observing or just imagining those iconic animals in their incredible habitats. I was especially captivated by his description of a deadly battle between a large elk and a mountain lion, a battle that concluded with the deaths of both of them; or his several sightings and musings about the “Giefer Bear,” a legendary Grizzly Bear who roamed the Rocky Mountain Front for several years. He teaches us, through his texts and photos, to “see,” to “smell,” and to “listen” to all that inhabits the wonderland that we call the “Crown of the Continent.” It is clear that Waldt has a bias for the large animals (he dedicates one of the five chapters to the Grizzly) and to winter (a better time of year to track animals and to listen attentively without extraneous noise? and about which he exclaims: “the dominant season in the Crown”), but over the course of the five chapters he doesn’t slight the smaller creatures (squirrels, pikas, song birds, and even salamanders) or flora of all kinds (bitterroots, white blossoms, limber pine, quaking aspen, and even lichen). And he helps us learn to see and appreciate all of this.

My only criticism of the book has nothing to do with what one finds in the book, but has to do with the title: since the book deals almost exclusively with Glacier National Park and the contiguous Rocky Mountain Front and hardly mentions or shows images from other parts of the Crown (Waterton Lakes, the Canadian Crown areas outside of Waterton in both British Columbia and Alberta, the “Bob,” Flathead

Lake and the Mission and Swan Ranges), a more apt title would have indicated his somewhat narrower focus. This is a minor criticism and should not detract from both the beauty and importance of this very special book, a book that, as Douglas Chadwick asserts in his Afterword, “shows us a corner of the globe that doesn’t embody the 21st century’s problems nearly so much as it holds a cure.” All of us who love, are fascinated by and in awe of the complex ecosystem that is the Crown, with Glacier and Waterton National Parks at its very center, owe Ralph Waldt a lot for sharing his photos, stories, and naturalist insights in such a compelling way. And further thanks go to the numerous outstanding photographers whose work enhances an already spectacular book. My recommendation: go out and buy it in whatever bookstore you can find it and give it generously to all of your friends in this holiday season, to those who know the Crown well and to those who might be on the verge of making its acquaintance.

Jerry Fetz

