ABSTRACT


The purpose of this thesis is to examine Glacier National Park’s maritime industry from 1895 to 1930. Although historians have discussed other aspects of Glacier National Park’s history, the history of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries maritime industry and the people who made it possible have not been explored satisfactorily. This thesis discusses the nature and motives of those groups that played essential roles in creating the industry, from the tourists who rode and created a demand for the vessels to the entrepreneurs, park administrators, and boat concessionaires who invested much of their lives promoting and operating boats to serve Glacier’s visitors. This thesis also places Glacier’s tourism vessels into a national context by demonstrating the integral relationship between Glacier National Park’s maritime and lake tourism businesses, American tourism, conservationism, and the railroad industry.
PLYING THE WATER
IN AMERICA'S LITTLE SWITZERLAND:
THE ROLE OF TURN OF THE CENTURY LAKE
TOURISM IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts in History

by
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Located in a remote northwest corner of Montana (Figure 1), Glacier National Park (Figure 2) was not originally suited to accommodate easy transportation for tourists who began visiting the area in 1895. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, a burgeoning tourism industry was established and grew through the first quarter of the century. Tourist businesses and entrepreneurs centered their operations on Glacier’s many lakes, building hotels, holding social events, and starting hiking expeditions, or “treks,” near the lakes’ shorelines. They marketed the lakes as centers of civilization in the middle of the pristine wilderness and exploited the lakes for recreation and transportation, creating a maritime industry in a region far removed from any major coastline or waterway. Such maritime and tourism industries existed due to the almost simultaneous growth in western tourism, western conservationism, and the railroad industry. This thesis will discuss the development of Glacier National Park’s maritime tourism industry from 1890 through 1930 by examining the causes and factors for its existence: late nineteenth century western tourism and conservationism; the railroad industry; and early park administration related to the operation of tourism launches.

Chapter I introduces the “American Tourist,” who this person was; why he or she traveled thousands of miles to consume western scenery and adventure, and the individual’s relationship with the railroad industry. As the nineteenth century waned, the United States, looked towards the West as it struggled to redefine its national identity
Figure 1: Location of Glacier National Park (John Uhler, "Glacier National Park Map;" available from http://www.glacier.national-park.com/maps.html; internet; Page Makers, LLC; accessed 28 November 2005).
and settlers, accessible to a burgeoning group of people: middle-class Americans wanting personally to experience the natural beauty and allure of the West, or tourists. Inspired by patriotism and self-discovery, tourists rode the railways, visited previously inaccessible regions of the country and created a market that railroad barons exploited through intense advertising and promotional campaigns.

The western tourism industry was also shaped by Americans conservationists. Chapter I concludes with a brief look at influential American conservationists who excited and awakened the consciousness of the American public to the natural resources in the West. They also created public pressure on the government to create federal preserves. Moreover, they sometimes allied themselves with railroad companies that had the financial means and political gravitas to influence members of Congress.

Chapter II presents the early history of the Great Northern Railway Company and its founder, James J. Hill. The Great Northern, as it was commonly known, was by far the most influential factor in creating Glacier National Park. The creation of a new national park was not a priority, however, for James J. Hill. He wanted his own transcontinental rail line, choosing a northern route from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington. When his transcontinental was finished in 1893, it brought people through remote parts of America, including the Glacier Valley region. Passengers took a break from their long travels to view the natural wonders of the area. A tourist industry supplying basic accommodations and fare emerged to meet the needs of the visitors. Maritime businesses, like ferry service, fishing guides, and row boats, followed to provide Glacier’s first tourists with recreational and transportation opportunities. Chapter
II finishes with a description of Glacier’s first tourist accommodations, transportations, the rudimentary beginnings of lake tourism, and the first “tourist launches.” These tourist launches were boats that carried passengers, supplies, and staff to remote destinations, such as mountain hotels, chalets, camps, and trailheads. These steamers and gasoline launches were one of two ways visitors to the area reached the remote wonders of the park. The other option was a long, arduous horseback ride through the densely forested perimeter of the inter-mountain lakes. Boats provided quick and comfortable transportation, allowing passengers to relax, watch the beautiful scenery, and converse with each other.

Chapter III begins with the contentious movement and resistance to the creation of Glacier National Park in 1910. It examines the role the Great Northern played in this process. In 1907 James J. Hill was replaced as the railroad’s president by his son, Louis, who observed the growth of the tourism industry and believed Great Northern’s participation would be financially rewarding. While not overtly supporting the Congressional bill to make Glacier America’s tenth national park, he put pressure on legislators behind the scenes. Once the park was created, he invested in the success of the national park by building roads, magnificent hotels and by becoming the largest employer in the area. He also created the Great Northern’s promotional campaign of Glacier National Park a standard by which other marketing campaigns were compared. The Great Northern Railway constructed and promoted Glacier National Park as “America’s Little Switzerland,” and connected it to America’s sense of Nationalism by ascribing Glacier with another of its ubiquitous slogans, “See America First.” Without
the Great Northern Railway’s financial and administrative contributions, Glacier National Park would not exist.

Chapter IV details the internal factors that helped Glacier National Park’s lake tourism succeed during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Since the period between 1914 and 1929 was the golden age for wooden vessels on Glacier’s lakes, this chapter focuses on the tourist launches and the role they played in making tourists’ visits memorable. It also highlights the life of Captain William (Billy) Swanson, preeminent boat builder and captain during this time period. Swanson’s career in Glacier National Park also delineates the evolutionary nature of business partnerships between the National Park Service, the Great Northern Railway Company, and private concessionaires like Swanson. The chapter concludes with a look towards the Depression of the 1930s and the end of status quo for early maritime and lake tourism industries when the automobile changed the face of tourism forever.

These tourism boats represented a unique maritime industry that played an important, but overlooked, role in the development of Glacier National Park. Although historians have discussed other aspects of Glacier National Park’s history, the history of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries maritime tourism has remained largely ignored. The history surrounding Glacier National Park’s maritime tourism industry and the people who made it possible has not been explored satisfactorily. This thesis helps fills this void by examining the nature and motives of those groups that played essential roles in creating the industry, from the tourists who rode and created a demand for the vessels to the entrepreneurs, park administrators, and boat concessionaires who invested
much of their lives promoting and operating boats to serve Glacier's visitors. This thesis also places Glacier's tourism vessels into a national context by connecting the integral relationships between Glacier National Park's maritime and lake tourism businesses and American tourism, conservationism, and the railroad industry.
CHAPTER I: THE AMERICAN TOURIST TRAVELS WEST

In 1915, Mary Roberts Rinehart, celebrated crime fiction author and correspondent during World War I, traveled three-hundred miles (482 km) on horseback with forty-two other people through the newly created Glacier National Park.\(^1\) With the skill of a seasoned writer, she documented not only her observations of the dramatic landscapes, but also her feelings and emotions evoked during the expedition. The impact of this journey reverberated through her writings. In her first book on Glacier National Park, *Through Glacier Park in 1915*, Mary Roberts Rinehart wrote, “If you love your country...if you are willing to learn how little you count in eternal scheme of things, if you are prepared...to be able to locate every muscle in your body...go ride the Rocky Mountains and save your soul.”\(^2\) Throughout her narrative, Rinehart consistently described feelings of patriotism, self-discovery, empowerment, and spirituality. These were the characteristics of the West that the tourism industry had worked so hard to develop, cultivate, and market to an ever increasing number of consumers since the end of the Civil War.

After the destruction and the horror of the Civil War, the United States focused its attention on the West in an effort to redefine the nation’s identity. Tourism played an important role in this process. In the summer of 1865, a group that included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Schuyler Colfax, along with a correspondent for the

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New York Times, an editor for the Chicago Tribune, and the editor for the Springfield Republican, Samuel Bowles, set out on a transcontinental train trip. Bowles described the journey in his book, Across the Continent: A Summer’s Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States with Speaker Colfax. He believed that the transcontinental railroads would introduce Americans to a new future filled with unlimited material, moral, and political promises. The Republic had been “saved, reunited, bound together as never before.” Bowles’s bold statement, written less than a year after Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, reflected the desire of United States’s officials and politicians to redirect the nation’s attention towards a future filled with optimism, opportunity, and national unity.

Bowles and other journalists felt that America’s future rested in the railroads and the American West. He praised the expanding railroad system as a way for people to visit and to experience, or to tour, the Western frontier. Bowles imagined a “Grand Tour” across America in which everyday Americans would use the railroads to travel from East to West, stopping and visiting scenic landscapes and Western cities, interacting with new and diverse cultures, observing abounding resources, and sharing in the emergence and flourishing of a nation. He predicted people would travel across the country not simply to reach a destination, but also for the pleasure of experiencing America. This new type of travel meant a new type of traveler, a person not motivated

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3 Samuel Bowles, Across the Continent: A Summer’s Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States with Speaker Colfax (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1865), 1-2.
by the destination, but by the journey; a journey to experience America as it evolved into a nation and thus, to be American.⁴ This was the “American Tourist.”

Although tourists and tourism were not original concepts in the post-Bellum years, each was markedly different than the preceding notions about the nature of tourism. The connotation of the verb, “tour,”⁵ as a circular journey in which one leaves home, travels leisurely from one site to another, and then returns home, entered the English language in the middle of the seventeenth century, and was quickly followed by the related noun, “tourist.” In the early eighteenth century, the “Grand Tourist” traveled continental Europe, experiencing the best parts of various cultures, such as French sophistication and Italian art. By the late eighteenth century, the “Romantic Tourist” emerged, immortalizing classical architecture and natural beauty in poems and literature. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw an unwritten, yet well-established and well-precedented image of the typical tourist: a wealthy erudite who had sufficient disposable income and time to pursue culture and pleasure at various sites.⁶

These early nineteenth century tourists used the expanding transportation network of steamships, packet lines, and railroads to visit scenic landscapes and cultural attractions. Although America lacked the abundant history relative to the European countries, the young republic was beginning to find value and symbolism in its natural landscape. Nature became the object of “picturesque tours” that were echoed to the

⁵ “tour” derives from torenus, the Latin word for a lathe, an instrument that spins an object around so it may be cut or delineated.
⁶ Shaffer, See America First, 11; Maxine Feifer, Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 137-162.
public in rich, flowering imagery of authors and artists, such as James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, and Washington Irving. These intellectuals used America’s natural wonders, such as Niagara Falls, to legitimize America as a nation, claiming that such dramatic landscapes compensated for its historical immaturity. By attempting to transform the mountains, valleys, and forests into tourist attractions, these literati were a force in the new American nationalism. Their efforts, however, influenced more than genteel elites. A growing number of middle-class Americans found themselves with enough disposable income that they too began to view scenic tourism not only as an ideology, but also as a commodity to be consumed.\footnote{Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 12-13.}

The advent of tourism rested on structural changes in technology, ideology, and economy. As technological and the ideological infrastructure of an urban-industrial consumer culture evolved, the tourism industry depended on the creation and marketing of unique attractions, the development of adequate modes of transportation, and the growth of a leisure ethic. The earliest tourist businesses began in the Northeast with its rapid economic and technological developments. Travelers sought the mountains, valleys, lakes, battlefields, and literary shrines of New England and New York to escape the city heat and to socialize. At the beginning of the Civil War, the tourism industry was primarily regional and best characterized as a combination of resort vacationing and cultural or literary pilgrimage, during which tourists mingled with fashionable society, sublime scenery, and American achievement.\footnote{Ibid., 15.}
The Civil War accelerated the process of centralization and consolidation that had created the modern nation-state. This new state supported westward expansion through a strong and active national government, a national transportation and communication network, and a national market. These changes promoted the shift from regional tourism to the national tourism that Samuel Bowles envisioned. It also re-focused America on a new national consciousness, based primarily on the mythical ideal of the West.

The ideal of the West as a vast, untamed, frontier land combined with the promise of westward expansion inherent in *Manifest Destiny* as a central component of the modern United States in the late nineteenth century. The West embodied the process of becoming American: an intrepid and pioneering spirit to travel on the frontier; courage, persistence and fortitude to overcome untamable lands and Native Americans; industrious and entrepreneurial acumen symbolized by the trans-continental railroads, and spirituality rooted in the land, American land, itself. These ideals transcended the regional politics and moved beyond the ideal of the Union reuniting North and South. The West was now America’s own backyard. It was celebrated in literature, art, political rhetoric and pulp fiction as the “true” America. But while the touring public embraced the mythical ideal of the West, they also understood the hardships and realities associated with Western travel and were not easily persuaded to forego easy travel in the American northeast or Europe.⁹

Western tourism promoters after the Civil War faced the problem of convincing people to travel to areas that were too "new," with too little history, too vast, too rough and too strange for Eastern Anglo-American sensibilities. The rigors of early Western travel, such as arduous overland stagecoach journeys or potentially disastrous steamboat wrecks, kept away all but the most adventuresome travelers and journalists away. Stagecoach lines and steamboat companies did not promote tourism during their pioneering phases. Their purpose was to haul as many passengers and goods from one location to another. They offered no special motive for Easterners to travel west. For railroad companies, however, tourism quickly formed an important part of their business, and they had to develop strategies to meet their consumers' demands and expectations.\(^{10}\)

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 started a Western tourism boom as railroad companies advertised widely for passengers, promoting the railway journey as the purpose of a trip, not simply a pleasant by-product of reaching a destination. Beginning with simple announcements by the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines in the late 1860s and multiplying in the 1880s with all types of beautifully illustrated brochures and posters, railroad companies funded elaborate advertising campaigns to sell the West to prospective tourists and settlers. Through the 1880s, railroads began offering package tours across the continent. Since the European influence was still present in travelers' imaginations, tour agents promoted their journeys using European analogies: California was the Mediterranean, a transplanted Italy;

Colorado was Switzerland with replicas of the Alps. Western resorts had to match European luxury; for the elite and well-financed type of tourist, European-like scenery had to be accompanied by European-like buildings and services.\textsuperscript{11}

As transcontinental railroads extended across the West from the 1880s to the early twentieth century, they laid the foundation for national tourism by making the journey comfortable and brief, relative to stagecoach or steamboat.\textsuperscript{12} Railroad companies coordinated train schedules and demanded that time was measured to the minute, eliminating local standards of time zones. They arranged first-class accommodations in hotels and lodges that they often helped to construct. They organized sightseeing excursions and popularized a canon of Western attractions that helped make the transcontinental journey a sight-seeing trip.\textsuperscript{13} Ease of travel made all the difference in promoting tourism in the American West. The most notable symbol of the ease and comfort that railroads provided was the Pullman Palace Cars that were beautiful and comfortable, but offered an insulated experience, separating tourist from both nature and natives. Tourists who rode safely and in style were generally people of means, desiring comfort and service.\textsuperscript{14}

The increased democratization of travel and tourism meant that middle-class Americans were traveling to the same places in the same manner as wealthy Europeans and Americans. As tourism flourished, more “refined” travelers started to resent the

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 134-140; Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen,” 45; Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 24.
\textsuperscript{12} Steamboats traveled up the Missouri from St. Louis to Fort Benton, Montana, since 1860, but since the trip took at least two months each way, only the most hearty and venturesome tourist attempted it (Schwantes, “No Aid and No Comfort,” 127-128).
\textsuperscript{13} Schwantes, “No Aid and No Comfort,” 139-140, Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 24-26.
\textsuperscript{14} Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen,” 45.
increased “lower classes” as “hordes of hoodlums who desecrate nearby beauty spots.”

Early criticisms, such as this one, reflected a class bias that was transposed onto the meaning of the words “tourist” and “traveler.” The latter term reflected a “higher breed” of vacationer—the established aristocracy or refined erudite, seeking a meaningful and deep cultural experience and edification. A “tourist,” had become a shallow, incompetent, naïve fool who was easily duped, but was also a dangerous consumer and objectifier of other cultures; a villain destroying cultural purity while simultaneously unable to enjoy or benefit from any real cultural significance due to his or her own shallowness.

The irony in this class elitism was that those refined travelers, who claimed moral superiority through their sophistication and belief that they truly appreciated new cultural experiences while traveling, were derided as “Pullman Pioneers” by those who traveled through the West before the comforts of the transcontinental railroads or Pullman Palace cars. These early Western travelers believed that they were the real pioneers of traveling and proclaimed that Pullman Pioneers were not travelers at all, but simply wealthy tourists content to experience the world in comfort and in style behind the safety of the train’s windows. A real traveler was active in his journey, experiencing the challenges, hardships, and rewards of different locations and cultures offered. They claimed prestigious ancestry like Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Horace Greeley, Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, and Charles F. Loomis, who tramped 3,500 miles (5,633 km) across


\[16\] Shaffer, *See America First*, 3-4.
the United States, documenting his experiences and hardships along the way. Although they believed that the railroad made "tourists" out of "travelers," the old-timers were unashamed of their acceptance of traveling in Pullman luxury. On the contrary, they seemed to revel in contrasting their harsh, real adventures with the soft civility of the newcomers while displaying their elevated moral characters and physical constitutions, tempered in the crucible of travel.\textsuperscript{17}

While the established traveling "aristocracy" resented the growing of number of "tourists," and explorers derided "Pullman Pioneers," middle-class travelers complained about elitist attitudes and prices charged for basic services. Tourist businesses quickly learned that they always had a balancing act to perform in attracting tourists, and they had to adapt to new conditions in order to prosper over the long term as tourism was governed by fashion, fads, and capricious public trends.\textsuperscript{18} Tourism and railroad agents and marketers had a role in shaping these trends. As transcontinental travel became easier, tourism promoters produced a flood of information and images that focused the public imagination on the mythic West. To secure the public's fickle gaze on Western sites, landscapes, and cultures, the railroads' tourism agents turned to writers.\textsuperscript{19}

In addition to advertisements, pamphlets, and brochures, the tourism industry turned to Western travel and railway guidebooks. In 1869, the \textit{Great Trans-Continental Railroad Guide} written by George A. Crofutt upon the completion of the Union Pacific


\textsuperscript{18} Annalies Corbin and others, \textit{A Bathhouse and Plenty of Fresh Air: Archeology in a Thermal River Environment} (Greenville, NC: East Carolina University, Maritime Studies Program, 2003), 12-13.

\textsuperscript{19} Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 17; Schwantes, "No Aid and No Comfort," 133.
Railroad described over five hundred cities, towns, lakes, rivers, hot springs, watering places, and summer resorts. The guide provided train schedules, information on fares, and practical advice to travelers on how, when, and where to travel. From 1869 through 1884, it was the standard for transcontinental tourist guides.\(^{20}\) In 1886, the Union Pacific Railway issued the guidebook, *Inter-Mountain Resorts*, to inform readers of the amenities and opportunities offered at various Western destinations, including Salt Lake City and Yellowstone National Park.\(^{21}\) Another guidebook proclaimed the transcontinental journey allowed passengers to see “lands of gold, of silver, of coal, of agriculture…These are the lands of new endeavors, of fresh impulses, and for these reasons are of special interest to tourists, business men, and seekers of health and pleasure.”\(^{22}\) The guidebooks not only legitimized the possibilities of transcontinental travel, but also redefined the tourist experience. They proclaimed the view from the train window revealed America’s greatness and bounty. They promoted westward progress and expansion, settlement and investment, and business and pleasure travel. In so doing, they linked transcontinental travel with westward expansion.\(^{23}\)

Guidebook authors were not the only writers traveling on the transcontinental railroads. Anyone with a pen and paper, an observant eye, and contact with a publisher or editor, could get published, and publication meant authenticity. By the mid to late nineteenth century, transcontinental railroad trips became travel accounts. Journal writers


\(^{21}\) Schwantes, “No Aid and No Comfort,” 133.


\(^{21}\) Shaffer, *See America First*, 20-21.
and diary-keepers looked out their windows as they traveled across country in the safety and warmth of their Pullman cars, and recorded their journeys and experiences. By the turn of the century, the Western landscape was littered with descriptions of romantic scenery, unbridled optimism, and patriotic emotion.\(^{24}\)

The tourism industry actively promoted tourism as a ritual of American citizenship. Professional and individual writers reflected this nationalistic sentiment. Stephen Merritt, for example, traveled with his family across country, visiting sights in Colorado, New Mexico, Alaska, Yosemite, and Yellowstone. He was amazed by what he saw, writing, "Our dear home [America]! We are learning to love it more and more, and to rejoice that we live in this favored Blessed Country. How our hearts bound with joy under the Stars and Stripes."\(^{25}\) Merritt's effusive proclamation of patriotic joy revealed a personal voyage that many American tourists were embarking upon: a journey to discover the true meaning of being an American.

In this journey, men were not the only ones discovering their "American" heritage. The increased democratization of travel allowed women to participate in the Western experience and share their own viewpoints and thoughts with the public. Women writers echoed their male counterparts in expressing feelings of patriotism and American nationalism, symbolized in landscapes of the West. One writer urged her fellow Americans to vacation in the Rocky Mountains instead of the Alps for patriotic

\(^{24}\) Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen," 45.
\(^{25}\) Stephen Merritt, "From Ocean to Ocean or Across and Around the Country. Being an Account of the Raymond and Whitcomb Pacific, North West and Alaska, Excursion of 1892. Including the Yosemite Valley and the Yellowstone Park, 1892" TMS, pt. 1, p. 1, Western Manuscript Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; quoted in Shaffer, See America First, 2.
reasons. Mary Rinehart, who traveled west numerous times and produced two books about her experiences, wrote that the Alps never allured her as the Rocky Mountains did. She wondered if this was because "these great mountains [the Rockies] are my own, in my own country." Women writers, painters, and artists also conveyed feelings of spiritual awakening and awe-inspiring beauty as they described the Western scenery in their individual works. They also used their books, articles, and pieces of art to inspire other women to take the westward journey and to express their own individuality and emancipation.

A Western tour often allowed women to showcase their intrepid, "un-feminine," character. Women with independent spirits were eager to share in the adventure and challenges offered by mountaineering clubs that toured the Western wilderness in groups known as "tramps." They had to follow certain rules, however. Despite facing the same hardships and rigorous terrain as their male counterparts, they had to be accompanied by men and had to wear skirts that created problems when riding a horse or climbing a steep mountain slope. Although often cautioned about the travails of Western tramps that included long horseback rides and hiking in addition to the transcontinental railroad trip, women writers encouraged their female readers by relating their own empowering experiences. Rinehart stated that during her trip to Glacier National Park in 1915 women

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26 Kaufman, National Parks and the Woman’s Voice, 11.
27 Rinehart, Through Glacier Park, 24-25.
28 Kaufman, National Parks and the Woman’s Voice, 50.
29 Kaufman, National Parks and the Woman’s Voice, 3. Women were not allowed to wear knickers without controversy and unwanted attention until World War I and the women’s suffrage movement. They invented devices to reduce the skirt’s hindrance, using buttons, hooks, and flaps in efforts to increase mobility while maintaining the skirt’s appearance. A solution for many women was the "Yosemite Suit," which was a skirt covering the bloomers and ending just below the knee. By 1870, the Yosemite suit was the standard dress for women journeying through the national parks.
who were helped into their saddles at the beginning of the trip swung into them easily as
the trip progressed, that their eyes were clearer, and that their sense of achievement grew
with each day.30

For both men and women, the West symbolized an opportunity to achieve
physical, mental, and spiritual health while discovering what it meant to be American.
This process of American discovery was both spontaneous—as reflected in the writings
of personal journals and diaries—and manufactured as the tourism industry used writers,
such as guidebook authors, to shape and to process an image of American West. As
tourist businesses reacted to the changing demands of their customers, they also
manipulated the image of the West to meet those demands.

Tourism industries maintained a delicate balance in packaging the image of the
West. While tourists wanted challenge and adventure, they did not want their challenges
and adventures to be truly dangerous or life-threatening. Therefore, Western promoters
had to sell the public on the belief that the West still maintained its pioneering heritage,
wildness, and un-civilized purity, while at the same re-assuring its customers that it was
safe. They had to convince travelers that people and events that were once frightening
were now civilized, welcoming, and even quaint.31

Balancing comfort with sufficient wildness to lure tourists, particularly from the
East, was a primary challenge for tourism and railroad marketers in the late nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries.32 The Great Northern Railway, for example, assured its

30 Rinehart, Through Glacier Park, 51.
31 Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen," 46.
32 Schwantes, "No Aid and No Comfort," 137.
customers that “There is the impression in the East that the people of the Western States are disposed to be lawless. The West is a child of the East...There is as little disorder and frontier rowdiness in Montana as in any other place in the country.”33 The Northern Pacific echoed this message, stating, “The old West still lives in the mountains, but it has taken on alluring ways for Eastern folks who want to be perfectly safe, sane, comfortable, and happy. Sacrifices gladly made by pioneers that they might enjoy the scenic glories and health-giving opportunities of the rugged old West are no longer required.”34 This conflict between the West’s wild image and tame reality shifted the focus from European analogies, such as the Mediterranean and the Swiss Alps, to American elements such as rodeos, dude ranches, and outdoor sporting opportunities, particularly hunting and fishing.35

From the earliest transcontinental journeys, railroads used hunting, which had been an informal part of any long steamboat or stagecoach journey, as an integral part of railroad tourism.36 A traveler crossing the great plains in 1877 remarked that the antelope, “were too tame for their own comfort...they were within easy range of the train and there was a perfect fusillade from the rifles and revolvers with which a good many passengers were armed.”37 A journalist wrote while riding through the Oregon Blue Mountains, “We caught glimpses occasionally of a timid deer, an inquisitive wolf, and coveys of the dusky or mountain grouse, which seemed to take no notice of the human

33 General Information about Montana (St. Paul: Great Northern Railway, 1900), 11.
34 Rocky Mountain Vacations (St. Paul: Northern Pacific Railway [ca. 1910]).
36 Schwantes, “No Aid and No Comfort,” 135-136
foes firing at them with revolvers." The most common game of the hunt, however, was the buffalo. Railroad companies, like the Northern Pacific, offered hunters specially built railcars that were equipped with a cook and a porter and allowed up to six weeks of hunting and fishing while they were parked on the railway's right-of-way. When over-hunting of buffalo and other game reduced the stock during the 1870s and 1880s, railroad agents became concerned that a loss of game might choose another rail line where large wildlife was still plentiful, both to hunt and to observe. This fear of losing clientele caused some railroad companies to partner with an unlikely group: conservationists.

The conservation movement of the American West evolved out of the Romanticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the Transcendentalism of the mid-nineteenth century. Western conservation was the product of various elements occurring simultaneously: individual efforts to protect natural resources; scientific expeditions that reported the special nature of the West; and increased public awareness that the presumably boundless American frontier was vanishing. Inspired by the Transcendental writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, a new generation of far-sighted individuals saw the landscapes of the West as resources that existed few other places in the world and that present and future generations of Americans had the right to visit and experience them without modification from human industry. Often they joined scientific expeditions to explore, survey, and document the geographic features. Following the Civil War, these expeditions often

38 John M. Murphy, Rambles in North-Western America from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), 166.
39 Schwantes, "No Aid and No Comfort," 137.
produced reports, articles, and books that captured the public’s interest, and fueled people’s desire to see the West firsthand.\textsuperscript{40}

These publications also exposed the fragility of the West’s natural resources. The public began to realize that the untamed West was disappearing as a result of the inexorable march of settlement, industry, and civilization. Americans joined conservation clubs and lobbied for the federal government to become more active in preserving the American frontier. For fifty years after the Civil War, the conservation movement rose and ebbed in the American consciousness as various proponents and opponents battled over the necessity of creating federal preserves and national parks. Under the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt, known as the first conservation-minded president, Western conservationism achieved status as a top national priority, but the foundation for federal involvement in preserving America’s natural heritage began while the Civil War still raged.

In 1864 two events shaped the future of Western conservationism. The first was a Congressional act that granted California the land of Yosemite Valley. This was the first time that land was set aside for a state government to operate as a preserve and not open for homesteading or industrial exploitation. Frederick Law Olmstead, one of the seminal figures in the conservation movement who advocated for and later designed New York City’s Central Park, was the Park’s first superintendent. He offered his opinion to Yosemite Valley’s board of commissioners on why Congress became involved:

The first and less important is the direct and obvious pecuniary advantage which comes to a commonwealth from the fact that it possesses objects which cannot be taken out of its domain, that are attractive to travellers and the enjoyment of which is open to all...A more important class of considerations however, remain to be stated...It is the main duty of government, if it is not the sole duty of government, to provide means of protection for all its citizens in the pursuit of happiness against the obstacles, otherwise insurmountable, which the selfishness of individuals or combinations of individuals is liable to interpose to that pursuit.\textsuperscript{41}

As Yosemite Valley became the first federally mandated natural preserve, another watershed moment in the conservation movement occurred with George Perkins Marsh’s \textit{Man and Nature; or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action}. This book was called “the fountain-head of the conservation movement,”\textsuperscript{42} because it was one of the first to focus on the ecological impact of humans on the environment. Marsh has been called “the broadest American of his day...at home in twenty languages...[who] helped to found and foster the Smithsonian Institution...[and] provided new insights into the nature of the history of man and of the earth”.\textsuperscript{43} He served as the American ambassador to Italy when he wrote \textit{Man and Nature}. Traveling through the European countryside, he noticed how thousands of years of civilization and exploitation had depleted nearly all natural resources, such as forests. Without timberland, he observed that Europe, particularly Italy, had suffered massive soil erosion and water pollution. Applying these observations to the environment of the United States, he warned that Americans were taking the same reckless attitude towards the environment. Citing various examples of the

harmful effects of forest depletion in America, he urged for responsible husbandry of the land and for scientific surveys to learn more about humans’ destruction of the environment. Although most of his contemporaries failed to heed Marsh’s advise, his treatise was reprinted several times, and some his recommendations eventually were followed.44

If Americans were not ready to be responsible stewards of their natural resources during the Post-bellum years, they certainly were willing to explore them. Congress and businesses sponsored many geological surveys of the West, hoping to find easy mountain passes for the creation of a transcontinental railroad and to locate rich mineral deposits for industrial and mining opportunities. These expeditions also revealed the majesty and uniqueness of the Western landscape. The publications of the reports from these trips and articles printed from various memoirs captured the public’s imagination about the West. Such natural wonders were not found in Europe or elsewhere, making them uniquely American. The American public started to identify their heritage not with historical monuments, like the pyramids or the Pantheon, but with natural monuments like giant sequoias or thundering waterfalls.

In 1871 a survey team set out to investigate a region in the Rocky Mountain Northwest rumored to be a mythical land containing magical bubbling water, volcanic features, a grandly colored canyon, and an immense high-altitude lake. Under the direction of Ferdinand V. Hayden, the chief of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, this expedition explored and documented this

44 Douglas Strong, Dreamers and Defenders, 36; Peter Wild, Pioneer Conservationists of Western America (Missoula, Mt: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1979), 5.
"Wonderland," better known as Yellowstone. The reports and descriptions of this exploration helped convince Congress that the Yellowstone plateau was one of America's true natural treasures, worthy of protection. In 1872, Congress made Yellowstone the country's first national park.45

Encompassing land in the Wyoming and Montana territories, Yellowstone was truly a national park, and this fact raised many issues concerning the federal government's role and responsibilities. The early years of the park saw mismanagement due to inexperienced administrators and lack of funding, wide-spread slaughter of the park's big game animals, particularly elk, logistical nightmares in infrastructure like transporting tourists to the park and lodging them once there. There were unscrupulous businessmen and companies, who over-charged tourists for meager services and threatened to transform the park from a natural preserve to their own tourism monopoly.

One such company was known as the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company that under the semblance of wanting to organize and manage the park altruistic purposes, actually arranged a monopoly of all the park's tourism services like hotels, stagecoaches, telegraphs, guides, and horses. It acquired the sole right to all of Yellowstone's timber lands to make telegraph poles, hotels, and fuel, and all of its arable lands for their cattle to forage since the company was also in the ranching business. Although the company achieved early success, its shady practices caused the company to go bankrupt in 1884,

and it sold its holdings and properties to the Northern Pacific Railroad Company in 1885.\textsuperscript{46}

Yellowstone’s growing pains set an example for future parks to learn from and to avoid, but one important precedent emerged: the relationship of railroads and tourism with national parks. The Northern Pacific put its advertising and promotional departments into motion to publicize Yellowstone to the American public. Using descriptions from previous explorers, naturalists, and travelers and its own marketing techniques, the Northern Pacific helped Yellowstone with its two million acres of Rocky Mountain wilderness and ten thousand thermal features capture the public’s imagination.\textsuperscript{47}

Yellowstone was a geographic manifestation of Americans’ growing desire for physical places of peace, quiet, spiritual nourishment, and connection to primeval wilderness free from spoiling effects of civilization. In 1886, the Secretary of the Interior stated that Yellowstone meant,

The preservation of wilderness of forests, geysers, mountains…and game…in as nearly the condition of nature as possible, with a view to holding for the benefit of those who shall come after us something of something of the original ‘wild West’ that shall stand while the rest of the world moves, affording the student of nature and the pleasure tourist a restful contrast to…busy and progressive scenes.\textsuperscript{48}

Ideological arguments for conservation and preservation of wilderness like this one gained increased attention as the public grew more aware and wary of the problematic consequences of industry like pollution and the exploitation of labor. Although Americans increasingly appreciated the value of nature, Western conservation still needed a dominant personality who would convey the message of wilderness preservation with the enthusiasm, passion, and literary eloquence. They needed a Western equivalent to New England’s Thoreau. A Scotsman by the name of John Muir, stepped up to this challenge, and became known as “the most magnificent enthusiast about nature in the United States, the most rapt of all prophets of our out-of-door gospel.”49

Muir dedicated his life to exploring the wilds of the West and lauding its qualities, particularly the Yosemite Valley, which he vigorously lobbied the federal government to appropriate from California. Muir criticized California for improperly managing the preserve by allowing private industries to harvest the forest timber, construct buildings, and permit grazing of sheep that Muir called “hoofed locusts.”50 Muir took his fight to save Yosemite Valley and to create more national parks to the public, publishing passionate and eloquent descriptions of Yellowstone and Yosemite in outdoor magazines and journals like Harper’s Monthly.51 He believed that the parks were places for people to find peace, relaxation, and spiritual re-nourishment. In his book, Our National Parks, he explained the revitalizing virtues inherent in the pristine wilderness:

51 Strong, Dreamers and Defenders, 95; Wild, Pioneer Conservationists, 29-43.
The tendency nowadays to wander in wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is necessity, and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. Awakening from the stupefying effects of vice of over-industry and the deadly apathy of luxury, they are trying as best they can to mix and enrich their own little ongoings with those of Nature.52

Originally published in 1901, Our National Parks reflected a change in America’s consciousness and its attitude towards natural resources. Muir and other authors published wondrous descriptions of the West, but they also painted vivid descriptions of industry and settlement ruining the majestic landscape. These accounts increased the awareness concerning the fragility of nature and the fear of losing America’s frontier lands that once seemed unlimited. As Americans became more concerned that they were losing their natural heritage, many traveled westwards to see and experience this heritage for themselves.

The irony of this increase in Western pilgrimage to national parks was that American tourists were using the same industry that was threatening the pristine nature they wanted to experience: railroads. Furthermore, many tourists only wanted to experience the wilderness in “civilized comfort.” Muir lamented that most tourists in the national parks were content to watch the world roll by from the rail car windows or verandas of the hotels and as they traveled clung to their “precious trains and stages like wrecked sailors to rafts.”53 American tourists paradoxically wanted to experience the pristine quality of the primitive West without giving up the comforts of the civilized East.

52 Muir, Our National Parks, 3.
53 Muir, Our National Parks, 32.
Although Muir and other conservationists understood, supported and advocated the need for tourism in national parks, they were torn between conviction that conservation could come only through popular support and contempt for the "rough vertical animals called men, who occur in and on these mountains like sticks of condensed filth." Roderick Nash called this dualism of conservation movement, "the chronic preservation vs. enjoyment dilemma," which highlighted the conflict between preserving nature and promoting it to acquire support and funding for nature's preservation.

Although Muir had cynicism towards tourists' appreciation of nature, he maintained hope that they could be educated and become better stewards. One tourist Muir was careful to court and to educate was President Theodore Roosevelt, without whom Muir would not have succeeded in making Yosemite Valley a national park in 1906. For three days and nights in May 1903, Muir gave Roosevelt a personal tour of the Yosemite Valley. He explained how the American wilderness and forests were in danger. Roosevelt listened and addressed a Sacramento crowd with the following address after his visit with Muir:

Lying out at night under those giant sequoias was lying in a temple built by no hand of man, a temple grander than any human architect could by any possibility build, and I hope for the preservation of the groves of giant

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56 Strong, Dreamers and Defenders, 102.
57 Ibid., 103.
trees simply because it would be a shame to our civilization to let them disappear.58

Roosevelt became one of the great conservation presidents, and his administration was the first to make preservation of America's forests and wilderness a national priority. He believed that these lands "should be set apart forever for the use and benefit of...people as a whole and not sacrificed to the short-sighted greed of a few."59 Roosevelt used suggestions from conservationists like Muir to shape his policies, but the man who had the most influence on the president was Gifford Pinchot, chief of the Bureau of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture.60

Pinchot believed that forest lands should not be preserved because of their own aesthetic attributes or be shelters for plants and animals, but should be set aside for pragmatic and responsible husbandry. This meant that lumber companies could harvest timber within federal, not private, guidelines.61 Pinchot first coined the term conservation and outlined his vision in three primary goals: developing America's natural resources and making them immediately available; preventing waste of the resources; and preserving the resources for the benefit of the many and not for the profit of a few. Although Pinchot's ideas brought him into conflict with preservationists like Muir, who wanted preserved forests removed from all private exploitation, they were also broad enough to give the conservation movement a wider appeal among moderates. With Roosevelt's support, Pinchot used the Forest Service to implement aggressive policies

61 Ibid., 41.
that appropriated millions of acres of forest for the federal government and to organize the first Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources in 1908.\footnote{Strong, Dreamers and Defenders, 76; Wild, Pioneer Conservationists, 45-57.}

This conference brought more scientific leaders and politicians to discuss conservation issues than any previous effort. The luminaries who attended included President Roosevelt, members of his cabinet, Supreme Court justices, governors from thirty-eight states and territories, and influential citizens like William Jennings Bryant and Andrew Carnegie. The Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources resulted in an inventory of the country’s natural resources, a brief but spirited cooperation between the federal and state governments on conservation issues, and a high water mark in the conservation movement during Roosevelt’s tenure.

Near the end of Roosevelt’s presidency, however, various members of Congress blocked the passage of further conservation legislation and prevented funding for already established programs. Many of these legislatures either personally resented the president’s and Pinchot’s heavy-handed attitude towards conservation policy or were financially backed by powerful special interest groups. Nevertheless, with the help of Pinchot and other conservatives, Roosevelt designated more lands under federal protection than any other administration, raised conservation to the level of a national priority, and brought it to the forefront of American consciousness. By the end of his presidency, Roosevelt had set aside more federal forest preserves and created more national parks than all his predecessors combined. Moreover, one more national park was about to be put on the map in part because another of Roosevelt’s conservationist
friends: George Bird Grinnell, who made it his mission to make the Rocky Mountains of Glacier area the tenth national park.\textsuperscript{63}

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 20, 1849, George Bird Grinnell could boast a genealogy that included five colonial governors, the first white woman born in New England and a president of Yale University. When he was ten his family moved to Audubon Park on Manhattan Island,\textsuperscript{64} where his father purchased a home from the widow of the famous John J. Audubon. Grinnell spent his boyhood going to a school run by Mrs. Audubon and taking time to explore Audubon’s exotic collection of animals from the Missouri region. He also found time to chase bats, pigeons, and robins with his hickory bow and arrows. Later he traveled to Europe before entering Yale University in 1866 where he received his bachelor of arts in 1870 and a doctor of philosophy in 1880.

Once his undergraduate studies were completed in 1870, he decided to join an expedition under the direction of O.C. Marsh, a famous paleontologist who was looking for fossils in the West. This six month journey included a stop in Yosemite Valley, which implanted a love of Western landscapes, animal, flora and fauna in Grinnell. In 1872, he returned to the West to participate in a Pawnee buffalo hunt and again in 1874 after accepting an invitation to be the naturalist on a military expedition to the Black Hills of Dakota Territory. During this 1874 expedition, Grinnell so impressed the

\textsuperscript{63} Strong, Dreamers and Defenders, 77-84; Wild, Pioneer Conservationists, 45-57; Gould, Roosevelt, 199-201.
\textsuperscript{64} Located between the present 155\textsuperscript{th} and 159\textsuperscript{th} streets.

It was on this trip that Grinnell witnessed the destruction of large game, such as the buffalo. He estimated that during the winter of 1874 and 1875 over three thousand elk were killed with even more buffalo and deer killed. Grinnell predicted that if the killing of these large animals went unchecked, they would become extinct. But Grinnell did not believe that this gratuitous killing was supported by all hunters. He stated, “The general feeling of the better class of frontiersmen, guides, hunters, and settlers is strongly against those who are engaged in this work of butchery.”\footnote{William Ludlow, *Report of a Reconnaissance from Carroll Montana Territory, on the Upper Missouri to the Yellowstone National Park, and Return Made in the Summer of 1875*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printin Office, 1876), 61.} This was the beginning of Grinnell’s conservationist philosophy in which he promoted responsible hunting, or what he called “outdoor sportsmanship,” and railed against the wasteful slaughter of wild game.\footnote{Hanna, *Stars Over Montana*, 116; Diettert, *Grinnell’s Glacier*, 13.}

Grinnell practiced this outdoor sportsmanship on all his expeditions, championed its cause in the pages of *Forest and Stream*, and formed national and international organizations to promote his beliefs in conversation and animal protection. For example, because he blamed the destruction of North American birds on ladies’ fashion trends that emphasized bird skins, wings, feathers, and heads, he helped create the Audubon Society in 1886, which by the end of the year had over twenty thousand members in North America, Europe, and Asia. In 1887, he and ten other men formed the Boone and
Crockett Club. Grinnell and two others were charged with writing the organization’s charter. Their efforts resulted in a document that perfectly embodied and espoused Grinnell’s notion of a conservationist or an “outdoor sportsman.”

To promote travel and exploration in the wild and unknown...portions of the country; to work for the preservation of the large game of this country, so far as possible, to further legislation for that purpose...; and to promote inquiry into, and to record observations of the habits and natural history of, the various wild animals.

As a charter member, co-founder, and the most active and influential figure of the Boone and Crockett Club, Grinnell formulated almost every idea the club adopted and practiced. He introduced most issues the club involved itself in and wrote most of the club’s hunting and conservation stories. He was not the most famous member, however. One of the two other men who helped Grinnell write the founding charter was the future President of the United States: Theodore Roosevelt. Grinnell never missed a chance to visit the West, but he was not able to join a particularly famous expedition in 1876 due to work-related responsibilities.

After the Yellowstone expedition of 1875, Grinnell was promoted to natural history editor of *Forest and Stream*, and he still worked at the Peabody Museum at Yale University as an assistant of paleontology. These duties and his continuing doctoral studies made it impossible for him to participate in another military expedition as chief naturalist. Scheduled to depart in the summer of 1876, this expedition was under the command of General George Armstrong Custer, who had met Grinnell in 1874 while

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Grinnell was waiting to join Ludlow for three weeks at Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory. A few months after declining the General's invitation, Grinnell learned of Custer's death at the Battle of Little Bighorn.\footnote{Ibid., 13}

Despite dangers like the Battle of Little Bighorn, Grinnell yielded to his fascination with the West by returning to Yellowstone and the Montana Territory often in the 1880s. In 1885, he visited for the first time a remote region in the northwestern part of Montana. This was the St. Mary Valley, located on the eastern side of the future Glacier National Park. He started publishing pieces in *Field and Stream*, describing the beauty of the region. He was enchanted with the Glacier area, and he made it his mission to explore, document, publicize, and protect it for the rest of his life.\footnote{Ibid, 47-48; Hanna, *Stars Over Montana*, 117.}

Grinnell organized exploration parties that mapped and named the region's geological features like glaciers, lakes, and mountains. These expeditions also employed his outdoor sportsman philosophy and usually had ample opportunities for hunting. His enthusiasm for hunting lessened over the years as his curiosity to record the area's geography, animals, plants, and cultures increased. He developed an amicable relationship with the Blackfeet tribe who gave him the name, *Pe-nut-u-yeis-tsim-o-kam*, meaning Fisher Cap. When the mining boom in the 1890s brought un-welcomed miners in Blackfeet territory, Grinnell became a negotiator between the Blackfeet and the United States Government which wanted to purchase a strip of land along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. In a tense and contested negotiation process, Grinnell helped both agencies reach an agreement. The United States purchased the desired land that became
known as the “Ceded Strip” for 1.5 million dollars from the Blackfeet in 1895.\textsuperscript{73} The mining boom on the land was short-lived, but the resulting purchase of the Ceded Strip increased the borders of the future Glacier National Park to the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1895, Grinnell also wrote a long article entitled, “Crown of the Continent,” which described the majestic scenery of the region within the Ceded Strip, including the St. Mary valley and lakes:

> No words can describe the grander and majesty of these mountains, and even photographs seem hopelessly to dwarf and belittle the most impressive peaks. The fact that it is altogether unknown, the beauty of the scenery, its varied and unusual fauna, and the opportunity it offers for hunting and fishing and for mountain climbing, give the region a wonder attraction for the lover of nature.\textsuperscript{74}

Although the “Crown of the Continent” was not published until 1901, it helped to focus a large audience on the Glacier region, and earned Grinnell the epithet, “Father of Glacier Park.”\textsuperscript{75}

Grinnell contemplated making the Glacier region a national park as early as 1891 when he wrote, “How would it do to start a movement to buy the St. Mary’s Country, say 30 x 30 miles (48 km) from the Piegan indians [sic] at a fair valuation and turn it into a National reservation or park. The Great Northern R.R. would probably back the scheme…This is worth thinking of and writing about.”\textsuperscript{76} He understood the benefits of

\textsuperscript{74} George Grinnell, “The Crown of the Continent,” Century Magazine 62 (September 1901).
\textsuperscript{75} Hanna, Stars OverMontana, 123.
\textsuperscript{76} George Grinnell, “Manuscript dated 2-10 August 1928, describing visit to the St. Mary’s Lake region and various Blackfoot stories,” George Bird Grinnell Collection, Yale University, Hew Haven; quoted in Diettert, Grinnell’s Glacier, 57.
this unusual partnership between railroads and conservation. For years, Yellowstone had benefited from the promotional campaigns of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Grinnell stopped in St. Paul, Minnesota, to present his thoughts to F.I. Whitney, the Great Northern’s passenger agent. Grinnell envisioned a “public park and pleasure resort, somewhat in the nature of Yellowstone National Park, or the Banff National Park on the Canadian Pacific.” Whitney understood that Grinnell’s vision would give the Great Northern Railway benefits, too, since having a national park associated with its transcontinental line from St. Paul to Seattle meant more passenger traffic as the American tourist wanted to consume the experience of the American West before it vanished. Grinnell and Whitney, however, had an uphill fight in making the Glacier region a national park, not the least of which came from Whitney’s boss: James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway.

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77 Diettert, Grinnell’s Glacier, 63.
CHAPTER II: THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY ARRIVES
AND DEVELOPS THE GLACIER REGION

Born on September 16, 1838, James J. Hill (Figure 3) displayed a love of learning
and willingness to work hard as he grew up in Upper Canada. At the age of five, he was
enrolled in Rockwood Academy, a Quaker institution, where he learned to examine
problems analytically, and he made an indelible impression upon his instructors with his
acumen. Forced to leave school at fifteen because of his father’s death, he worked briefly
as a store clerk, but decided to travel to various American cities, looking for work. He
eventually arrived in St. Paul, Minnesota, July 21, 1856. Working various jobs in the
railroad and river traffic industries, Hill decided to start his own commission agency. At
the age of twenty-seven, he had developed a reputation as a capable and honest
businessman. By the end of the 1860s, his business of obtaining and forwarding freight
from steamships to railcars supplied one railroad company with almost a third of its
volume.

In the mid-1870s, Hill partnered with three other businessmen, Norman Wolfred
Kittson, Donald Alexander Smith, and George Stephen—dubbed the “associates”—to
acquire a railroad company. On May 23, 1879, the associates purchased the St. Paul and
Pacific Railway Company and its subsidiary companies to establish rail service from St.
Paul to Winnipeg, Canada. They re-organized this conglomeration into the St. Paul,
Figure 3. James J. Hill at age thirty-five. (Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society, photograph collection, no. por 8540 p11, negative no. 83736, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN).

Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway Company, also called, the Manitoba, with Stephen as the new company’s first president.\textsuperscript{78}

Through his tireless and hard-working nature, Hill succeeded George Stephen in 1882 as president of the Manitoba. During the early 1880s, Hill thought seriously about expanding the railway westward. Many around him supported this idea, emphasizing the potential financial opportunities found in Western grazing lands, timber-rich forests, mineral resources, and millions of acres ready for agricultural development. One

proponent of Manitoba’s creation of a Western line was Paris Gibson,\textsuperscript{79} who forwarded information about Montana to Hill, urging him to see the territory’s amenities.

Although initially reluctant, Hill eventually visited Montana in 1884. Inspired by his observations, particularly the opportunities for mineral mining, he acquired stock in three Montanan companies: the Red Mountain Consolidated Mining Company in Rimini; the Great Falls Water Power and Townsite Company; and the Montana Central Railway Company that connected Great Falls with Helena and Butte. By 1886, Hill decided to lay track westward from Minot, Dakota Territory. To outpace his competitors, he ordered more than 700 miles (1,127 km) of railroad built in the following eight months, double the Manitoba’s production for all of 1886. Through a massive amount of man power, organization, and logistics, a network of 940 miles (1,513 km) of rail connected Minot to Great Falls and Helena, Montana, by November 19, 1887, making 1887 a record year and surpassing Hill’s demand by 140 miles (225 km).\textsuperscript{80}

The expansion during 1887 led to backlash and financial concerns from stockholders in the Manitoba the following year. The increased railroad mileage not only failed to accrue or even to sustain operating revenues, but raised operating costs and decreased the company’s income by $300,000 from 1883 to 1888. As tension grew among board members, Hill purchased more stock in the Manitoba, strengthening his control and weakening the possibility of a hostile takeover of the company by ambitious

\textsuperscript{79} Gibson was an important businessman, rancher, and founding father of Great Falls, MT, who later was elected to the U.S. Senate (Hidy, Hidy, and Scott, \textit{The Great Northern Railway}, 56).

\textsuperscript{80} Hidy, Hidy, and Scott, \textit{The Great Northern Railway}, 37, 56-61.
financiers. On April 24 1889, he won unqualified support from his board of directors after a tumultuous and contentious year.

After emerging successful from the tensions of 1888, James J. Hill and his supporters prepared to extend their railroad to the Pacific. One of their first actions was to appropriate power away from the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway Company in 1890 by transferring the operation of the Manitoba to one of Hill’s other companies. This transfer was viewed as retaliation for those who opposed Manitoba’s westward expansion by rendering stockholders of the now defunct railway powerless. The company to which Hill transferred control of the Manitoba was the Great Northern Railway Company.\(^{81}\)

Originally called the Minneapolis and St. Cloud Railroad Company, the Great Northern Railway was formed in 1856. Hill acquired its charter soon afterwards in order to build some of the Manitoba’s lines. He used the Great Northern to appropriate power from the Manitoba’s shareholders and to fund his ambitious Pacific railway. He constructed a financial plan that authorized the Great Northern to lease all of Manitoba’s current and future property for almost a thousand years and to offer stock in Great Northern back to the Manitoba’s investors, essentially reselling them their old shares. The Great Northern began its lease of the Manitoba on January 31, 1890, and elected a new board by October 1890 with James J. Hill as president.\(^{82}\)

Four months after it leased the Manitoba, the Great Northern began constructing a rail line approximately 800 miles (1,287 km) to the Puget Sound following a northern

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\(^{81}\) Ibid., 70-71.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 73.
route. The board of directors wanted the route of the line located such that distance, grade, curvature, and construction costs were balanced against the operating costs for the finished product. Elbridge H. Beckler, 83 chief engineer of the Pacific extension, was put in charge of locating an acceptable course, which meant finding the most economical and feasible path across the Rocky and Cascade Mountains. Beckler quickly contacted surveyor, John Stephens, previously working for the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway making final location surveys from Spokane, Washington, to the Canadian border. 84

Meeting in Helena, Montana, Beckler told Stephens of the importance of finding a route through the Rocky Mountains, stating that if a pass was not found, the alternative route "would seriously handicap the Great Northern in Transcontinental Traffic [sic] and it would only be taken as a last resort, if nothing better could be found." 85 Becker also told Stephen that it was understood for many years "that a low pass existed at one of the heads of the Marias River...That, however, no definite knowledge, if any existed, could be obtained in regard to it, and that possibly its existence was merely mythical." 86 This "mythical" pass, however, did exist and was known as Marias Pass.

Although known to Native Americans, particularly Western tribes as well as white explorers, hunters and trappers, the Marias Pass lay officially "undiscovered" for

83 Born in Boston but raised in Maine, Beckler graduated from the University of Maine and served as an engineer with both the Northern Pacific and the Canadian Pacific Railroad Companies. In 1887, he was the chief engineer for the Montana Central.
84 Grace Flandrau, The Story of Marias Pass (St. Paul: Great Northern Railway), 9.
85 John F. Stephens, Southern Pines, NC, to General William C. Brown, Denver, 31 May 1928, transcript in Vaught Files, Glacier National Park Special Collections, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT
86 Ibid.
most of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{87} In 1810, the Canadian fur trader, David Thompson, reported that a large number of Native Americans crossed over the mountains, using a route corresponding to Marias Pass; an 1840 map showed Marias Pass with the simple demarcation, "Route across Mountains."\textsuperscript{88} Despite the evidence of Marias Pass's existence, threat of attacks by the Blackfeet Indians, noted for their fearsomeness and violence to intruders, discouraged further explorations. Over the years, the pass became overgrown with grass and fallen timber and eventually was forgotten. Interest in finding a northwestern route for a potential transcontinental railroad, however, brought renewed efforts to re-discover Marias during the 1850s. The governor of the Washington territory, Isaac I. Stevens, decided to take up the challenge of re-locating the lost pass.\textsuperscript{89}

With the help of the 1840 map, Stevens had a general idea of the pass's whereabouts. In October 1853, he sent a survey team to identify and map the pass accurately. The team, led by A. W Tinkham, an army engineer, incorrectly identified another pass as Marias Pass. This mistake resulted in Tinkham's report that Marias Pass was impractical for a railway.\textsuperscript{90} Dubious about Tinkham's conclusions, Stevens sent

\textsuperscript{87} Alan S. Newell, David Walter, and James R. McDonald, "Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park, and Historic Structures Survey," (West Glacier, MT: Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT, photocopied), 40. In July 1806, Captain Meriwether Lewis reached a point within twenty-five miles (40 km) of the present boundaries of Glacier National Park, which was close enough to see Marias Pass (Ibid.).
\textsuperscript{90} Flandrau, Marias Pass, 15; Donald H. Robinson, Through the Years in Glacier National Park (West Glacier: Glacier Natural History Association, 1960), 41.
another survey crew the following spring. The results of this expedition were more successful. The army engineer, James R. Doty, who led the party, wrote to Stevens:

Obtained a commanding view of the pass and the course of the river for a long distance to the southward. The pass continued about fifteen miles in breadth...up the pass to the southward no mountains obstruct the view; and I am satisfied that Mr. Tinkham could not have passed over this trail or he would not pronounce this portion of the pass so difficult as his report and topography present it. This pass is not vouched for as a good railroad or pack train route, yet it is believed worthy of further examination and I only regret that I cannot make it, as your instructions require me to be at Fort Benton on the last days of the month.  

Doty's plans for further exploration were stalled by Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, who thought too much money had already been spent on the search. With the beginning of the Civil War, Isaac Stevens left the Northwest, joined the Union army, and died at Chantilly.  

After the Civil War, ten more years passed before serious efforts were renewed to find a pass for the northwestern route. The Northern Pacific Railroad sent engineers to the area in the early 1880s, but they were unable to re-locate Marias Pass. Then in the summer of 1889, the Great Northern’s chief engineer, Elbridge Beckler, asked John Stephens if he had the “nerve” to go into the mountains during the month of December. Beckler explained the problems and difficulties that had hindered previous attempts, including hostile Blackfeet Indians, a “superstition that a Bad Spirit dominated that

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91 Doty, James, Report of Mr. James Doty of A Survey From Fort Benton, Near the Great Falls of the Missouri, Along the Eastern Base of the Rocky Mountains, to Latitude 49 degrees 30’ N., May 25, 1854, in Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Volume I, made under the direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-1854., according to Acts of Congress of March 3, 1853, May 31, 1854, and August 5, 1854, (Washington, D. C.: Beverley Tucker, Printer, 1855), 548.
92 Flandrau, Marias Pass, 7.
93 Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 43.
particular region,” and the severe winter weather typical in the Rocky Mountains in December. Stephens boldly stated, “As at that time – I was 36 years of age, my middle name was nerve, and as I had no notion of lying idle if any work of an engineering nature was in sight, I at once accepted the invitation,” and immediately traveled to Fort Assinniboine near Havre, Montana, to begin his duties.\(^{94}\)

Stephens found the pass that had eluded surveyors for most of the nineteenth century, but his search was not without difficulty and drama. Leaving Fort Assinniboine in late November with a companion he described as “worse than useless” and with sketches of the territory that were “generally wrong,” he followed a route north of the Marias River. Under constant harassment of blizzards, he reached the Blackfoot Indian Agency at Badger Creek where he tried unsuccessfully to hire a guide.\(^{95}\) Stephens persevered, eventually hiring a Flathead Indian guide.

Since his white comrade refused to go further, Stephens and his guide left the agency equipped with snowshoes they made from old frames and rawhide and a pair of blankets, a limited amount of food, bannocks,\(^{96}\) and bacon. Plowing through snow, two to four feet deep, Stephens’s guide abandoned him at a point called, “False Summit,” a few miles east of Marias Pass. Stephens continued alone noting, “I was fortunate enough, after a couple of attempts, to walk directly into what we know as Marias Pass.” He continued for a few miles along a creek until he was sure it was flowing westwards.

\(^{94}\) John Stephens, to General William C. George Snyder, 31 May 1928, transcript in L. O. Vaught Files, Box 1 file 18, Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.  
\(^{95}\) Ibid.  
\(^{96}\) Biscuits usually made with oatmeal, cornmeal, or barley meal.
following the Pacific drainage. On December 11, 1889, Stephens officially "re-discovered" Marias Pass. With a summit of 5,124 feet (1,562 m), Marias was the lowest pass crossed by any railroad and saved the Great Northern more than one hundred miles of track to the west coast. This helped the company to be the most economically operated railway of any of the transcontinentals.

The impact of the re-discovery of Marias Pass was immediate. Five days after Stephen's discovery, Beckler sent three engineers led by C. F. B. Haskell to examine the Western side of Marias Pass more thoroughly and to survey the country between the pass and Flathead Lake in order to find the most direct line consistent with reasonable grades of 1 per cent or less. Throughout the winter and spring of 1890, Beckler sent Haskell to survey lands westward of Flathead Lake to the Kootenai River for the most suitable route. Haskell was reassigned in the summer to John Stephens in Washington and Idaho looking for another suitable pass over the Cascade Mountain Range. The surveys demonstrated that the northern route required less heavy construction and fewer tunnels. This gave the Great Northern its own line to Spokane Falls that the company did not have to share with its competitors, and offered potential agricultural, mining, and timber opportunities. Beckler was summoned back to St. Paul in July 1890 where he and Hill went over cost estimates and worked out details of construction. Hill decided to hire independent contractors placed under Beckler's supervision to lay the line.

97 Stephens to Snyder, 31 May 1928.
98 Ibid; Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 43; Flandrau, Marias Pass, 20-21; The Inter Lake "The Northern Route," 3 January 1890.
On August 1, 1890, the Great Northern awarded the first contract to D. C. Shepard, part owner of Shepard, Seims and Company, for the construction of 188 miles (303 km) of road from Fort Assinniboine to the eastern base of Marias Pass. Shepard's company wasted little time and began laying track westward from Pacific Junction on October 20, 1890. Laborers were recruited wherever they could be found, from other railroad lines, the country along the line, or in eastern cities. Most of the workers were European immigrants: Irish, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian and Greeks. They cleared paths, laid ties and 500-pound rail, and endured the primitive conditions in the harsh mountain environments for little pay. By the spring of 1891, the laborers crossed Marias Pass and were preparing to lay rail on the Western side. Before the year was finished, they had reached Kalispell, Montana, building 157 miles (253 km) of railroad.

Once track was laid, crews built water towers, coal storage bins, and other auxiliary items for operation of the railroad. As workers came to tend these facilities, they created settlements that sometimes became permanent towns. Some settlements, such as Belton, originally nothing more than two small boxcars left to house a station and to serve as depot for trains when founded in 1891, prospered. Belton quickly became a center for the development of the McDonald Valley as it was a regular stop for trains.


100 Shepard's son-in-law was the other owner of the company that had previously built many rail lines for Hill.

101 Hidy et al., The Great Northern Railway, 79-81; C. W. Guthrie, All Aboard! For Glacier: The Great Northern Railway and Glacier National Park (Helena, MT: Farcountry Press, 2004), 31-40.
traveling east and west. When the Great Northern inaugurated passenger service from St. Paul to Spokane, Washington, on August 14, 1892, the population of Belton increased as the railroad company brought in the first families.\footnote{102} By the end of 1892, these first homesteaders filed claims for land in Belton, and the lands surrounding Lake McDonald, which was two miles (3.2 km) to the north of Belton. These settlers quickly learned the land of the McDonald Valley was not suitable for agriculture. They turned to other pursuits for income: hunting and trapping furs to sell for necessities to others; traveling to nearby towns to seek employment; or creating services for railroad weary passengers who were looking for a brief respite from their long transcontinental journey. One of the first people to recognize the income potential of catering to tourists stepping off the train was Milo Apgar.\footnote{103}

Originally from Maine, Apgar arrived at Belton in 1892, carrying everything he owned in a two-wheeled cart. Traveling with his friend, Charlie Howe, from Great Falls, Montana, the two settled at the foot of Lake McDonald where they saw an opportunity to profit from the lake’s beautiful landscape. They immediately built cabins for visitors to rent.\footnote{104} These cabins were simply constructed and provided basic fare as they were built with little capital and were run by homesteaders. While Apgar maintained the cabins, his wife cooked simple meals for their guests. By the end of the year, Apgar had six or eight cabins, Howe had two or three; and a few other homesteaders were renting rooms in their

\footnote{103} Guthrie, \textit{All Aboard!}, 43; Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 14-15.
houses to tourists and vacationers. Eventually, a small village known as Apar grew around these cabins.\textsuperscript{105}

The success of Apar and Howe’s rental cabins and the promise of a continual stream of Great Northern passengers encouraged another enterprising businessman. Edward Dow constructed the first hotel in Belton near the train depot during the winter of 1892 – 1893. His original one story log hotel was torn down after a few seasons and rebuilt as a two-story, log-framed building containing more guest bedrooms. Dow used auxiliary buildings as a small store, dining room, post office, and ultimately built a stage line from Belton to Apar. The increase in size of Dow’s hotel and other properties was directly related to the completion of the Great Northern Railway to the Pacific coast in 1893 and the heavy promotional campaign that immediately followed.\textsuperscript{106}

As soon as the last spike was driven into the transcontinental railroad, the Great Northern passenger and ticket agent, F. I. Whitney, wrote and published eloquent booklets and brochures about the wonders to behold along the Great Northern’s line through the Northwest country. In 1894, Whitney wrote a booklet, \textit{Valley, Plain, and Peak}, that eulogized the beauty of Lake McDonald (Figure 4), “[Lake] McDonald is destined to become a famous resort in itself for its fishing, hunting, scenic, and health-giving attractions, and come in for a full share of poetic inspiration in verse and artistic reproduction on canvas.”\textsuperscript{107} The themes of outdoor adventure, natural beauty, spiritual and artistic inspiration, national pride, and a healthy atmosphere pervaded Whitney’s

\textsuperscript{105} Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 15; Guthrie, \textit{All Aboard!}, 43; Horace Chadbourne, Oakland, to Leona Harrington, Apar, 5 January 1957, transcript in “History of Apar,” p. 47.
Figure 4. Lake McDonald pictured in the 1894 brochure, Valley, Plain and Peak (F.I. Whitney, Valley, Plain and Peak, 52).

literature promoting Lake McDonald to his Eastern clients. To create a frame of reference for Easterners, he drew analogies between landscapes of McDonald Valley with the European and Northeastern scenery with which they were more familiar. For example, Whitney pronounced that the glaciers around Lake McDonald were as imposing as any in Switzerland. To give further credibility to his assertion that Lake McDonald was an un-tapped wonderland, he used the testimonial of a well-known outdoorsman who proclaimed the unlimited potential of the area:

With every scenic feature that makes the Alpine lakes attractive, with a far greater variety of game and fish, and immunity from the petty exactions of fees and tolls which make traveling in Switzerland vexatious, it [Lake McDonald] is to become the leading resort in America as soon as it becomes widely known. Already its annual visitors are counted by scores.

108 Ibid.
Its accommodations are more ample and comfortable than the primitive hostelry at Saranac and St. Regis, in the Adirondacks were, and the promise of a more brilliant history than there is before it.\textsuperscript{109}

Such hyperbole belied the reality of tourist accommodations in McDonald Valley at the time. Apgar was still a primitive village, and Dow’s and Howe’s lodgings provided only the basic necessities. Nevertheless, the popularity of these types of tourist services with weary rail passengers and locals looking for a beautiful spot to vacation spurred more entrepreneurs to invest their capital in proprietorship.

In the fall of 1894, a charismatic and controversial figure, George Snyder, arrived in Belton. Coming from St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was a well-known bicycle racer, Snyder took up a homestead in the spring of 1895 at the east side of Lake McDonald near its inlet. Ten miles (16 km) up from Apgar, Snyder chose a location near a tributary (later called Snyder Creek) of the lake that was previously used as a camp site for a survey team from a Great Northern competitor, the Chicago and Alton Railroad.

Financially supported by his father, Snyder cleared the site and constructed a two-story frame building of native, rough-cut lumber.\textsuperscript{110}

At the time of his hotel construction, Snyder claimed that there were five other homesteaders on Lake McDonald: Howe, Apgar, Frank Kelly, Frank Geduhn, and Dennis Comeau, all of whom became Snyder’s colleagues and competitors.\textsuperscript{111} As Snyder built his hotel, Frank Geduhn began construction of his own cabin resort at the head of Lake McDonald. By the end of 1895, tourists had a choice of places to stay: Dow’s hotel in

\textsuperscript{109} Chales Haddock, \textit{American Angler} (1894?); quoted in Whitney, \textit{Valley, Plain and Peak}, 52.

\textsuperscript{110} George Snyder, interview by L. O. Vaught, 1934, affidavit, transcript, L. O. Vaught Files, Box 1 file 18, Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT; [Harrington], “George Snyder,” in \textit{History of Apgar}, p. 6; Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 17.

\textsuperscript{111} Snyder, interview by L. O. Vaught, 1934.
Belton; Howe and Apgar’s cabins at the foot of Lake McDonald; or Snyder’s hotel and Geduhn’s cabins at the head of the lake.  

With the exception of Dow’s hotel, all of these accommodations had the problem of transporting visitors from the train depot in Belton to their locations on Lake McDonald. Snyder and other settlers constructed a rough wagon road from Belton to the foot of the lake in 1895. A coordinated transportation system then developed among the proprietors. Train passengers spent the night at Belton after stepping off the train, crossed the Middle Fork of the Flathead River in rowboats provided by Frank Kelley, Apgar and Howe, and then boarded a wagon to the foot of Lake McDonald provided by Dow, Snyder, and Apgar. This system worked well up to a point for Snyder and Geduhn, but there was still no means to bring tourists to their accommodations at the head of the lake.

Snyder remedied this problem in 1895 when he purchased a 40 foot (12 m) steamboat that was running between Somers and Polson on the nearby Flathead Lake. He transported this vessel to Belton by railroad and then loaded it onto a wagon for the final journey to Apgar. While he transferred it to Apgar, the boat’s heavy upright boilers and the rough and swampy wagon road made the journey slow, difficult, and dangerous.

114 Guthrie, All Aboard!, 43.
The boat was finally launched on Lake McDonald. Snyder chose this laborious land route over a water circuit that connected Lake McDonald with Flathead Lake because of the 1892 wreck of the steamer, *Oakes*.

The *Oakes* was 75 foot (23 m) stern-wheeler, owned and built by James Talbott, an entrepreneur who prospered during the mining boom in Butte, Montana, and came to Flathead Valley, purchasing the town site of Columbia Falls. He realized that a recently discovered coal deposit would entice the Great Northern to build their line through Columbia Falls, but he needed a way to transport the coal. Miles of difficult terrain covered with dense forests made transporting the coal overland impractical. Talbott decided, therefore, to use the *Oakes* to steam up the turbulent North Fork of the Flathead River.116

The *Oakes* set out from Columbia Falls in 1892 and had an auspicious beginning. The Flathead River, swollen by spring run off, allowed easy passage past the mouth of the South Fork. Fortune soon changed, however, when she came to the Red Lick Rapids. With boilers burning to capacity, the steamboat almost reached the quiet waters above the rapids when the engine failed. The *Oakes* foundered downstream back into the rapids. The captain and crew’s quick thinking and action saved the *Oakes*, but the predicament demonstrated the futility of relying exclusively on steam to power upstream. After this

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incident, the crew used line and a power winch on the forward deck\textsuperscript{117} in addition to the engines.\textsuperscript{118}

The \textit{Oakes} passed the mouth of the Middle Fork, and slowly progressed northward into the narrowing and quickening current of the North Fork. With the future boundaries of Glacier National Park on her right, the \textit{Oakes} was surrounded by primitive wilderness and turbulent waters. Twenty miles (32 km) upstream from the North Fork’s mouth, the steamboat yielded to the inexorable current. She rolled and yawed from side to side of the channel as the river struck from different angles. She began taking in water and finally capsized. The strain of the capsized vessel was too much for the tree that held the tow line. The tree was pulled out of the ground, and the \textit{Oakes} drifted downstream.\textsuperscript{119}

Although most of the \textit{Oakes} was salvaged and none of the crew was lost, Snyder assuredly did not want to expose his new boat to such a risky voyage. He named his new boat \textit{F. I. Whitney} (Figure 5), both to honor the Great Northern’s passenger agent who heavily promoted the lake area and to establish a connection with the railroad company, bringing immediate name recognition and indirect prestige to his hotel.\textsuperscript{120} The \textit{F.I. Whitney} was the first and only power boat on Lake McDonald for the next ten years. The vessel ushered in an era of lake tourism and gave Snyder a monopoly on lake services and an immediate advantage over his primary competitor, Geduhn.\textsuperscript{121} This, however, annoyed Geduhn who considered Snyder’s hospitality skills to be lacking:

\textsuperscript{117} The crew led a line from the power winch to a tree on the river bank, secure the line around the tree, and then use the power winch to tow the \textit{Oakes} upstream.
\textsuperscript{118} Ridenour, “Steamer \textit{Oakes},” 2.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 3-4.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 5-6; Walter, “History of Boat Operations on Lake McDonald, Glacier National Park,” 1.
\textsuperscript{121} Walter, “Roads in/near Glacier National Park,” 1.
Figure 5. George Snyder's steamboat the “F.I. Whitney” at upper end of Lake McDonald at site of present Lake McDonald Hotel (Frank Liebig, 1905, Courtesy of Glacier Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

As long as Snyder has the steamboat and hotel, his place will be the main starting point, although I am confident that had I his lay-out on my place, tourists would not always leave in such haste. Nevertheless, I am not jealous. I make a better living than he does.\textsuperscript{122}

If Geduhn was irritated at Snyder’s superior position in controlling the destination of the incoming tourists, it was only mild irritation. Geduhn never purchased his own boat to compete with Snyder, and he took great pains to maintain the dock at Apgar, which was broken apart every few years due to winter storms and ice.\textsuperscript{123} This \textit{quid pro quo} relationship allowed Geduhn to benefit from the \textit{F. I. Whitney}'s presence since the

\textsuperscript{122} Frank Geduhn, Apgar, to Lyman Sperry, 22 February 1896, transcript in L. O. Vaught Collections, Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.
\textsuperscript{123} Genevieve W. Gudger, Apgar, to Leona Harrington, Apgar, 6 May 1951, transcript in “History of Apgar,” p. 27.
vessel brought visitors to his hotel as well. As his patrons increased, he acquired the finances to build eight additional sleeping cabins and a two-story hotel by 1900.124

There were other improvements in the transportation system that increased the number of tourists visiting Snyder and Geduhn’s by making it easier to arrive from Belton. In 1897, a bridge was installed across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, allowing Edward Dow’s stage line to run the entire distance from Belton to Apgar. In 1897, horseback tours were begun around Lake McDonald and the Upper McDonald Valley.125 In addition, the Great Northern began to invest in the exploration of the area, inviting noted scholars and outdoorsmen to investigate the area’s natural and scenic wonders that might excite the imagination of the public. One such scholar was Lyman B. Sperry, a naturalist from the University of Minnesota.

Between 1895 and 1897, Sperry documented several geological features, including Avalanche Basin, Avalanche Lake, and the eponymous Sperry Glacier; all of which were promoted in eastern newspapers as amazing discoveries that were “far superior to anything they had seen – even in the Alps...”126 In 1897, Sperry’s nephew, Albert, joined the expedition. Later he recalled being picked up in the “good ship ‘Lake MacDonald’ [really the F.I. Whitney], a wood burner which chugged its way up fifteen miles of crystal water and made a safe landing at the dock at Snyder’s place.”127

Although he was mistaken about F.I. Whitney’s name, Albert Sperry gave one of the only accounts of the vessel’s captain at the time. Referred to simply as “Spider,” the

captain was a man with "gold teeth" who "proudly swung back and forth [the F. I. Whitney] between the end of the trail at the foot of Lake McDonald [at Apgar] and the hotel camp at the foot of the mountains [Snyder's hotel]." The captain's gold teeth were not the only peculiarity visitors experienced aboard the F. I. Whitney. The characteristics of the vessel's steam engines left indelible impressions on more than one passenger.

Albert Sperry referred to F. I. Whitney as a "wood burner that chugged its way...." Another reported that the boat "burned so much wood that it kept two men busy cutting wood for it." A wife of an early forest ranger said that traveling up the lake on the F. I. Whitney presented a dilemma: it was too hot below deck beside the boiler, but if a passenger was topside then the sparks burned holes in their clothing. The following account of Genevieve Walsh, daughter of a Montana senator, was a typical experience.

Arriving in Belton on a summer's night in 1900, nine-year old Walsh stepped off the train at night, "half-asleep," stumbling across the tracks to Dow's hotel. She noted that "No forests ever smelled so good, no air was ever so invigorating, no stars were ever so brilliant as those of this lovely country to my nine-year-old nose and eyes." The next morning she rode on the "horse-drawn stage" along a road that was "a slender ribbon, the trees so close that my father...pulled white and brown moss from the trees for me," until "...the road emerged from the forest and the whole beauty of the entire Lake

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128 Ibid., 18.
129 Ibid.
131 Robinson, Through the Years, 62.
was before us.”\textsuperscript{133} It was here that she saw a “funny old steamer...waiting for us at the
dock...My memory is of high boiler set in the exact middle of the boat, into the flaming
maw of which the firemen constantly fed cordwood sticks. And the passengers sat on the
benches and were showered with sparks from the engine.”\textsuperscript{134}

It was clear that the \textit{F. I. Whitney} presented a hazardous situation to its passengers
crammed together in the greatest numbers possible for each trip. But Snyder chose her
for sound reasons. She was a steam launch, a vessel type that was popular in America
because of its practicality and cost efficiency. Steam launches increasingly appeared on
the coastal waters of the United States after 1860 when advances in marine engineering
made small steamers practical and cheap relative to large steamships or yachts. This fact
made launches the first mechanically powered vehicles affordable to middle-class
Americans. In the 1870s, as the standard of living increased, many purchased launches as
recreational vehicles. To meet this demand, merchandisers created a mail-order market
that catered to individual tastes. There was a “model” for every preference and financial
means, “grades” of material that ranged from plain pine and black iron to mahogany and
birch, copper fastened, with “options” that included different levels of power, deck
awnings, condensers, and boat equipment. Because of simplicity of design and structure,
inexpensive building materials, and the abundance of skilled mechanics in boatbuilding
and engineering shops, steam launch prices were low. By 1890, steam launches were
used as recreational vessels and utility vehicles. Their practical duties included ferrying
passengers and cargo on resort lakes, rivers, and waterways of New England, Great Lakes

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 26-27
region, tidewater communities of the Mid-Atlantic, and Mid-West. Launches became symbols of tourism and recreation affordable to middle-class Americans.\textsuperscript{135}

This imagery added more rationale to Snyder’s choice of \textit{F. I. Whitney} as tourists who saw the launch on Lake McDonald would associate her with resort comfort. Although the \textit{F. I. Whitney} was not the premier launch of its day, she was useful and practical enough to serve the needs of Snyder and his guests for more than twenty years. Although some passengers complained, it added ambience to the experience, making the trip to the “rugged” West seem wilder. The \textit{F.I. Whitney} reportedly ran until about 1915, but her monopoly in lake transportation, along with Snyder’s involvement with the boat, ended almost ten years earlier.\textsuperscript{136}

In 1906, Frank Kelly, one of the early homesteaders along with Apgar, Howe, Snyder, and Geduhn,\textsuperscript{137} entered the tourism business, building rental cabins that became known as “Kelly Camp” at the head of Lake McDonald on its northwestern shore.\textsuperscript{138} Deciding not to rely on the \textit{F. I. Whitney} to bring tourists to his cabins, Kelley constructed his own boat, a 35 foot (11 m) gasoline launch, \textit{Emeline},\textsuperscript{139} named after his wife.\textsuperscript{140} Launched in June 1906, the \textit{Emeline} (Figure 6) was the first gasoline-engine


\textsuperscript{136} “Roster of Flathead Valley Lake Steamers,” Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.

\textsuperscript{137} Snyder, interview by L. O. Vaught, 1934.


\textsuperscript{139} Sometimes cited as \textit{Emaline}.

\textsuperscript{140} Newell, Walter, and McDonald, “Historic Resources Study,” 208; Robinson, \textit{Through the Years}, 63; “Roster of Flathead Valley Lake Steamers,” p. 5.; Helen Kelley, Kalispell, to James W. Corson, West Glacier, 26 November 1960, transcript in Boat Files, Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.
boat on the lake, making it superior to the *F. I. Whitney* since it was more fuel efficient, faster, and did not burn its passengers or their clothing.\textsuperscript{141}

While Kelley was beginning his tourist services on Lake McDonald, Snyder decided to leave the tourism business. In the winter of 1906, Snyder penned the following letter:

If you have anybody in sight that wants to buy they can have the ranch, hotel, boat, and everything for ten thousand dollars ($10,000). I suppose that naturally that will look high to a prospective buyer but I know it will be a losing proposition to me to take any less. My plan had been to plant some lots on the shore line and sell a few thousand dollars worth of lots and keep the balance myself, but if I have a chance to sell it in a bunch before I have closed the deal on any of the lots, I will let it go.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{142} George Snyder, Letter to [unknown], [January] 1906, transcript in Snyder File, Glacier National Park Historical Collection, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.
Snyder did sell both his boat and his property that year. He sold the *F. I. Whitney* to Jake S. Walterman,¹⁴³ who operated the vessel with help from his son for several years. His hotel and adjoining lots went to John Lewis, a local businessman. Afterwards Snyder moved to Belton where he bought some land on the north side of the Flathead River and built another “log hostel.” Lewis meanwhile renovated Snyder’s hotel and when Congress created Glacier National Park in 1910, he was the dominant proprietor in McDonald Valley.¹⁴⁴

Born in Greeley, Iowa, in 1865, John E. Lewis came to Helena, Montana, to play professional baseball. Eventually he met with nationally renowned Western artist, Charles M. Russell, who told Lewis of land opening up in the Flathead Valley. Lewis traveled to the valley and became a fur trapper and trader with the local tribes from whom he learned their customs and speech. He moved to Columbia Falls in 1892 where he practiced law, built a hotel, and continued to run several fur trading outlets in the valley. He speculated in land sales, an avocation that led him into the McDonald Valley in 1906. He purchased large tracts of land around Lake McDonald, the most significant of which was Snyder’s hotel and homestead. The hotel he purchased was a small wooden frame building that was unpainted and capable of accommodating eight guests.¹⁴⁵ In the years

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¹⁴³ There is no record about Walterman; presumably he lived nearby and was likely a homesteader in the McDonald Valley after the turn of the century.


¹⁴⁵ Ralph Owings, “John E. Lewis Was Early Day Fur Trader in Northern Montana; Built Famous Hotel at Head of Lake McDonald in Glacier Park,” *Medicine Lake Wave*, Montana Newspaper Association Inserts,
following his purchase, he made several improvements by adding guest cabins and
electric lighting with an ingenious power system as reported by a local newspaper:

He [Lewis] has harnessed the creek that empties into the lake beside his
hotel, and which is a fine water power, by building a dam, and by putting
in a water wheel and hitching it to a dynamo will be able to light his
premises by electricity with very little cost.\textsuperscript{146}

His hotel was officially known as “Hotel Glacier,” but was more commonly called
“Lewis’s.”\textsuperscript{147}

Although the number of Eastern tourists was increasing due to the Great
Northern’s promotional efforts and articles by outdoorsmen and conservationists, the
clientele for Lewis’s hotel and the other guest lodgings around Lake McDonald prior to
1910 primarily lived in the neighboring Flathead Valley.\textsuperscript{148} They were families and
friends who traveled to Lake McDonald for a summer vacation or hunting trip. They
often became attached to a particular accommodation, staying there on each visit. This
made competition between hotel owners rare. Sometimes these local visitors decided to
stake homesteads for themselves. At least ten families purchased plots of land and built
homes in the first decade of the twentieth century, including Genevieve Walsh Gudger’s
family who bought a “small home-site in 1909.”\textsuperscript{149} Even Eastern visitors sometimes
succeeded to the beauty of the area and became more than tourists. The experience of
Marcus Gruber, who first visited Lake McDonald in 1906, was a good example.

\textsuperscript{3} June 1935; Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 18; Marcus J. Gruber, Lake McDonald, to Leona Harrington,
\textsuperscript{146} The Kalispell Journal, “Electric Lights at Lake McDonald,” 19 March 1908.
\textsuperscript{147} The Kalispell Journal, “Flathead Lake Notes,” 18 March 1907.
\textsuperscript{148} Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 19.
\textsuperscript{149} Gudger to Harrington in “History of Apgar,” p. 27-28.
On a hunting trip in 1904, Gruber’s father (the general manager of the Great Northern) was so impressed with the beauty of Lake McDonald that he brought his family to the area for a summer vacation in August 1906. After getting off the train at Belton, a buckboard picked them up to transport them to Apgar. The road was so rough, however, with six-inch stumps left from when it was cleared, that they were forced to abandon the wagon and walk over an hour to the lake. It was, however, “well worth our troubles as we thought it was the most beautiful sight we had ever seen.” They stayed for three weeks. Since there were no roads, they had to hike or ride horseback into the mountains, or use the lake for transportation. Gruber remembered that all passengers and freight were handled by either the F. I. Whitney or the Emeline at the time. After this vacation, Gruber’s family returned two years later for another three weeks and his parents rowed around the lake several times, eventually finding a place for their summer home that they built in 1909.

By the summer of 1908, the recreational opportunities provided by and associated with Lake McDonald became major drawing points for attracting visitors, particularly from the Flathead Valley. In an effort to bring more visitors to the area, local newspapers began running articles describing all the activities and improvements that were occurring around the lake. In one article, the Kalispell Journal reported that Apgar improved his recently built hotel by adding a “commodious” dining room, installing a “water works” system, and decorating the walls with fine furs and mounted animals. Charlie Howe had a

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151 Gruber to Harrington in “History of Apgar,” p. 54-55.
152 Ibid.
number of "fine boats" that he used on river trips from Lake McDonald to Columbia Falls, and offered plenty of opportunities for fishing and hunting on the twenty mile journey. Finally, Lewis was congratulated for the "great change...made in Glacier Hotel...it is now a magnificent place."153 The following week the Kalispell Journal published an article that extolled the amenities of Frank Geduhn's new hotel that had opened only four days earlier:

Mr. Frank C. Geduhn, whose place at the head of Lake McDonald has been the popular summer resort...for many years, has been doing considerable improving there during the past year...and has erected and furnished a first-class hotel...The building is very pretty one, built of tamarack logs that have had the rough outer bark shaved off, after which oil was applied, resulting in a pleasing color. Inside the house is finished and furnished with all that can be desired to add to the comfort of the guests. A splendid cook prepares the meals, which are served in perfect style. In connection with the hotel there are plenty of bedrooms, so that anyone going to the lake for a day or two need not hesitate on that account.154

Beyond descriptions of the accommodations and activities available on the lake, newspapers published social lists about the people visiting the lake, where they were from, what they were doing, and in what lodgings they were residing.155 Newspapers also ran a number of advertisements that offered transportation from Flathead Valley to Lake McDonald and recreational opportunities. Whether it was an article or an explicit advertisement, the effect was the same: increased publicity for the McDonald Valley.

This increase in exposure created a sense of unofficial ownership on the Western side of Glacier. Montanans in the Flathead Valley thought of Lake McDonald as their

own recreational resource. During the first decade of the twentieth century settlers and perennial vacationers formed a community that viewed Lake McDonald as their own enchanted piece of earth. These early visitors would have bristled at the thought that they were tourists, but Lake McDonald was the beginning of the lake tourism industry in Glacier. It was not too long before powerful people realized the grandeur and alluring qualities of the lake. Soon a national movement threatened the locals’ perceived entitlement to their lake tourism heritage. This was the movement to make Lake McDonald part of a national park – Glacier National Park.
CHAPTER III: CONTENTION, CREATION, AND CONSTRUCTION OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

The creation of Glacier National Park was a contentious process. For every proponent of the park's formation, there was someone opposed to the idea. Great Northern Railway officials, businessmen, and local residents had their particular reasons why they believed that another national park was unnecessary. Great Northern's management, most importantly James Hill, was reticent to invest in a park. Mining and oil businesses believed future claims and opportunities would be lost. Finally, Flathead and McDonald Valley residents were concerned that their standard of living would decrease with the influx of tourists. Protests grew louder when Montana Senator, Thomas H. Carter, introduced the first bill on December 11, 1907 calling for the establishment of Glacier National Park.¹⁵⁶ This bill was the culmination of a ten-year campaign begun by conservationists including George Bird Grinnell, who despite passionate campaigning would not have succeeded without both a literal and figurative change in the mentality of the Great Northern towards the financial benefits of Glacier National Park's creation.

In 1890, Great Northern's chief engineer, Elbridge Beckler, wrote to James Hill describing the beautiful scenery of the Glacier area around Marias Pass. Hill responded, "We do not care enough for Rocky Mountain scenery to spend a large sum of money in developing it. What we want is the best possible line, shortest distance, lowest grades,

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¹⁵⁶ Diettert, Grinnell's Glacier, 89; Robinson, Through the Years in Glacier National Park, 54.
and least curvature that we can build.” Once all his demands were met and his transcontinental railroad completed, Hill was more interested in increasing the Great Northern’s freight traffic in agricultural, timber and mining commodities than in developing or promoting tourism. Bringing passengers onto the Great Northern’s rail cars was primarily the job of F. I. Whitney. After the turn of the century, Whitney finally received support from a Hill, but not James. Instead his son, Louis, developed a reputation as the Great Northern’s premier promoter.158

Born in May 1872, Louis W. Hill was the second of nine children. Early on he showed great interest in the Great Northern Railroad Company. After graduating from Yale in 1893 (the same year the Great Northern reached the Pacific), he went to work for the company, starting as a clerk in the comptroller’s office. Working his way up the company ladder, he occupied at least eighteen different offices, allowing him to experience and to learn the railroad business completely. By January 1901, he was president of a subsidiary railroad, the Eastern Railway of Minnesota. As he gained more experience with the Great Northern, he acquired his father’s trust and was allowed to carry out his father’s initiatives, and to make his own decisions with autonomy.159

157 James Hill, St. Paul, to Elbridge Beckler, Spokane, June 1890, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
Ultimately, he became president of the Great Northern on June 30, 1907 when his father retired.\(^{160}\)

An able successor to the great “Empire Builder,” Louis W. Hill immediately put his energies into increasing the amount of passenger traffic on the Great Northern through an intense promotional campaign. Hill understood better than his father that passenger traffic was then a major contributor to railroad revenues throughout the country and that the success of the Great Northern’s image rested on its ability to construct and promote the romance of railroad travel. He witnessed the promotional work of Whitney and saw the power that volumes of brochures, timetables, posters and other promotional articles had in bringing freight and passengers to the Great Northern. He observed how other railroad companies including the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the Northern Pacific had promoted and advertised resort stops along their lines, such as Banff, Canada, and Yellowstone National Park, respectively. Further, he realized that national parks like Yellowstone were more than simple destinations; they were national symbols that people associated with a railroad company that carried tourists to the park. For example, the Northern Pacific Railroad Company saw its reputation and its finances enhanced through its relationship with Yellowstone. The rail line catered to passengers wanting their own adventures in “Wonderland.” Astutely aware of such a positive relationship between railroads and national parks, Hill turned over the daily operations of the Great Northern

to his assistant, Ralph Budd, and focused his attentions on a campaign that left an
indelible mark on the Northwest.\footnote{161}

Hill developed a fascination and a love of the Northwest from an early age. As a
young man, he camped and hunted in Glacier in an area he called the "American Alps." Later he made frequent business trips on the railroad to Glacier, where he took time to go
on fishing and hunting expeditions and to explore the region on horseback and by wagon.
Throughout his life, he cultivated his passion for Western culture, preferring Western
dress over Eastern fashions. He developed relationships with Native American tribes,
extreme the Blackfeet, who played a seminal role in the Great Northern’s future promotional
campaigns.\footnote{162} During one journey to the Glacier area, he had an epiphany as described in
a contemporary magazine article,

Louis W. Hill realized that he was Christopher Columbus. He had
discovered altitudinous America. With the realization came vast ambition.
It was there that he might share his discovery with every American. He
wanted to make it possible for every man, woman, and child, with or
without a capable pair of legs, to stand in Gunsight Pass and saturate his
soul.\footnote{163}

Although Hill had selfless motives in desiring to create an American destination
that rivaled the European Alps and was accessible to the average citizen, he also
understood the potential economic benefits the Great Northern stood to accrue with the
creation of Glacier National Park. In 1911, he made this explicitly clear, stating, "The

\footnote{161} Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 109; Shaffer, See America First, 61-62; Guthrie, All Aboard!, 60.
\footnote{162} Hanna, Stars Over Montana, 165; Johnston, "Louis W. Hill Sr.,” 9; Ann Regan, “The Great Northern
and the ‘Glacier Park Indians,’” in After the Buffalo Were Gone: Louis W. Hill Sr., and the Blackfeet at
Glacier National Park, The Science Museum of Minnesota (St. Paul, MN: Science Museum of Minnesota,
2002), 12; Guthrie, All Aboard!, 60.
\footnote{163} Patricia Johnston, “Louis W. Hill, Sr.,” 9
\footnote{164} Rufus Steele, “The Son Who Showed his Father,” Sunset Magazine, March 1915, 479.
railroads are greatly interested in the passenger traffic to the parks. Every passenger that goes to the national parks, where he may be, represents practically a net earning."\footnote{164}

Therefore, it was unlikely a simple coincidence that six months after Hill became president of the Great Northern in 1907, the first bill to create Glacier National Park was presented to Congress.

Opposition to this first bill was immediate, but the most vociferous objections did not rise from national industries, such as the timber or mining industries. Instead residents living in and around the McDonald and Flathead Valleys were the most concerned about the new park and its consequences for their lifestyles. A day after the bill was proposed to Congress, a local newspaper, *The Kalispell Journal*, published an article stating that a national park like Yellowstone would threaten the residents’ way of living:

> If the proposed park is governed on the plan of Yellowstone, for one thing there will be no hunting on it...What might be called another objection affects the small hotel and resort keepers of Lake McDonald. In a national park there will be no business of any kind except that conducted by the government or under its supervision...There will never be any more homes made in the region that is now included within the proposed park boundaries...It is possible, yes almost certain, that there will be no more logs cut and timber sawed within that large region.\footnote{165}

The following week, the *Journal* urged opponents to organize and to write their Congressmen and Senators, expressing their desire not to have the park created.\footnote{166} The residents of the area sent a petition to Senator Carter stating their concerns about the park’s proposed boundaries and conditions, and claiming that the loss of such arable

\footnotetext{164}{Louis W. Hill, Speech at First National Parks Conference, Yellowstone, 1911; quoted in Hanna, *Many-Splendored Glacierland*, 109.}

\footnotetext{165}{*The Kalispell Journal*, "Don’t Make a Park," 12 December 1907.}

\footnotetext{166}{*The Kalispell Journal*, 19 December 1907.}
lands prevented settlement of a "magnificent and fertile country that could support ten
times its present population."  

In addition to appropriating usable arable lands from farmers, local residents
feared that the new park might ruin the established social environment around Lake
McDonald. One resident opined in the *Kalispell Journal*:

Under the park system it will no longer be possible for a number of
congenial families to live near together and enjoy their boating parties and
neighborhood life as they have in the past. There will be too many
tenderfoots butting in for that.  

Such an editorial indicated the value residents of the region placed on Lake McDonald,
which had become a prominent place for not only settlement and recreation, but also for
socialization.

Due to the many objections received from his constituents and from Congress,
Senator Carter rewrote the bill and presented it again on February 24, 1908.  
The second version was received more favorably by Glacier area and Flathead Valley
residents since it "excluded all surveyed and deeded lands and valid mining claims filed
prior to January 1, 1908."  

This effectively eliminated the possibility of governmental
appropriation of potential agricultural and mining lands. It also allowed individuals to
keep their homes on Lake McDonald or to lease small tracts of land for construction of
new summer cottages. Because of these changes, *The Kalispell Journal* changed its
attitude and favorably reported the benefits of Glacier National Park’s creation:

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*167 The Kalispell Journal*, “Save Some Land: Senator Carter is Petitioned to Exclude Farm Lands on the North Fork from the Park,” 2 January 1908.
*169 Diettert, *Grinnell’s Glacier*, 90; Robinson, *Through the Years*, 54.
There are undoubtedly many advantages that will come from the creation of the park, chief among which is the improvements that will be made at the government’s expense and the extensive advertising it will give this part of the state....these benefits will be secured without any material drawbacks, and will certainly be a good thing for the Flathead valley and western Montana.\textsuperscript{171}

While this statement eventually proved prophetic, the second version of the bill failed to become law when it was tabled by the 60\textsuperscript{th} Congress, although it had passed in the Senate and was recommended by the House Committee on Public Lands with some amendments attached. Carter was not dissuaded, however. He introduced a third bill on June 26, 1909 that encompassed all previous suggestions and amendments, but had one more important difference: Louis W. Hill.\textsuperscript{172}

Although Hill realized that the park would be a valuable asset for the Great Northern’s passenger traffic, he had remained conspicuously silent about the creation of Glacier National Park since the first bill was introduced in 1907. He understood that his position and personal interest in the park’s genesis might jeopardize the bill’s chances since critics cried that the park was simply a Great Northern scheme to prevent other railroads from entering the region.\textsuperscript{173} Even while the third bill lingered in Congress from June 1909 until January 1910, he did not step forward to champion the cause.

Events in March 1910, however, stirred Hill and the Great Northern into action. With the third bill seemingly stalled again in the House Committee on Public Lands, Hill received a letter from Senator Carter so important that Hill’s secretary encoded it. The

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{172} Robinson, \textit{Through the Years}, 54; Dietert, \textit{Grinnell’s Glacier}, 90-93.
missive asked Hill personally to contact two Congressmen serving on the Committee and
to send the Great Northern’s resident lobbyist in Washington, D.C., to speak with a third
Committee member. Hill followed the requests and by March 15 the bill was out of
Committee. By April 13, the House passed the bill, and on May 11, 1910, President
Howard Taft signed the Glacier National Park bill into law, making Glacier National Park
the tenth park in the United States.174

If Hill was quiet while the bill to create Glacier National Park was being debated,
he did not remain so once the bill was signed into law. Having long remained in the
shadow of his illustrious father, Hill viewed Glacier National Park as a project wholly
and distinctly his own. He seized the opportunity with the enthusiasm, intensity, and
dedication that eventually earned him the epithet, “Godfather to Glacier.”175 With the
substantial resources of the Great Northern behind him, he simultaneously started two
ambitious campaigns to bring tourists to the newly created National Park. The first was
to construct and develop an infrastructure to support and to satisfy tourists by building
comfortable hotels, passable roads, safe trails, and a reliable communication system. The
second campaign involved advertising and promoting Glacier to capture the imagination
of Americans so they would forego their customary trips to Europe and choose to travel
hundreds of miles to an unknown region for their vacations.

To achieve both goals, Hill needed a unifying theme. A haphazard arrangement of
hotels, connected by roads with no appealing scenery might mean heavy financial losses
once word spread about such unsatisfactory conditions. Similarly, promotional material

174 Robinson, Through The Years, 54; Diettert, Grinnell’s Glacier, 95.
like brochures and pamphlets that did not define what experiences tourists could expect and enjoy on their trip meant that consumers might not invest their money in an unknown commodity. In searching for this theme, Hill was dealing with seemingly dichotomous images. To make Glacier National Park a consumable good desirable to Eastern tastes and sentiments about traveling, he had to do three things. He needed to combine Western "wildness" with European "civility," mix the burgeoning American Nationalism with European heritage; and make such dualities seem so natural and normal that the American tourist would not notice the contrasts. His unifying theme was "America's Little Switzerland," that he layered upon the already established and effective nationalistic slogan of "See America First."\(^{176}\)

Glacier National Park as "America's Little Switzerland" perfectly embodied Hill's image and vision of the Park's landscape. He once remarked that Glacier needed to have hotels designed in the Swiss style of architecture, "making a veritable American Alps." He wanted these lodges to be within walking distance of each other.\(^{177}\) He imagined a European-like transportation system with his railroad bringing tourists to the Park, where they easily traveled to a series of chalet-style hotels, lodges, and camps by a convenient and easy network of road, trail, and boat transportation.\(^{178}\) He quickly set about making his vision a reality and found little resistance from the Department of Interior, which was originally in charge of the Park until 1916 when the National Park Service was created.

\(^{176}\) Ibid., 22.
\(^{178}\) Walter, "Glacier Park in 1915," 20.
Since Congress did not allocate sufficient funding\textsuperscript{179} to hire enough administrators and rangers or to maintain the necessary facilities to accommodate and support the increasing number of tourists to Glacier National Park, the Department of Interior offered the Great Northern twenty-year leases and permits to make improvements in the park.\textsuperscript{180} During the early years of Glacier National Park, all hotels, roads, and trails on Glacier’s east side were constructed and maintained by the Great Northern with occasional federal funding. Great Northern officials later bragged that for every $1 allocated by Congress, the company spent $10. For example, Congress allocated $69,200 to Glacier National Park for the fiscal year of 1912, and although it was an increase, costs for road and trail maintenance alone came to $212,150. Since the Great Northern financed the rest, it was the Great Northern, and more specifically, Louis Hill, that determined the form of Glacier National Park’s landscape, based on his fascination with Swiss architecture.\textsuperscript{181}

Personal and business factors influenced Hill’s decision to use Swiss architecture in his hotels. He personally enjoyed Swiss architecture in his summer home in St. Paul. But beyond his personal preference, he knew that Swiss chalets were recognizable symbols of alpine landscapes that created images of European comfort and sophistication. This was particularly true for wealthy Northeastern tourists who vacationed in the Adirondacks of New York where Swiss chalets also dotted the landscape. In addition to being aesthetically symbiotic with mountains, the Swiss design had a practical

\textsuperscript{179} The first allocation of funding passed by Congress in 1910 was only $15,000. Alan S. Newell, David Walter, and James R. McDonald, “Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park, and Historic Structures Survey” (West Glacier, MT: Glacier National Park Archives, 1980, photocopied), 208.

\textsuperscript{180} Newell, Walter, and McDonald, “Historic Resources Study,” 213; Djuff and Morrison, \textit{View with a Room}, 12.

\textsuperscript{181} Djuff and Morrison, \textit{View with a Room}, 12-14; Walter, “Glacier Park in 1915,” 22.
application, too. The large roof overhangs were well suited for the heavy snows and the strong winds at Glacier.\textsuperscript{182}

The first building project began in 1906 with a chalet complex at Belton. This complex featured a dormitory and two separate cabins that accommodated approximately one hundred guests. Built to provide comfort and service to its passengers and to promote the scenic wonders of the new national park, the complex featured a number of amenities. These included acetylene lights, running water, and central heating to make the tourists comfortable. The studio in the facility had a large skylight that allowed visitors panoramic views of the mountains. These buildings were the Great Northern's first attempt to enter the west-side tourist business. Although the effort was ultimately unsuccessful, Hill learned important lessons that he applied to later construction projects.\textsuperscript{183}

Between 1911 and 1915, Hill personally selected sites for ten hotel and chalet camps. In 1911, the Great Northern constructed a series of tent camps connected by ninety miles (145 km) of trail through the interior of the Park. From Midvale (later East Glacier) on the eastern side of the Continental Divide to Belton on the Western side, it was possible to walk the entire chain of camps in four to six days without taking any side trips. An article in the \textit{Kalispell Journal} promised both an authentic outdoor and rugged adventure and the required comfort and civilized amenities. All the camps were described as having a large club room and a dining hall, "where excellent meals are

\textsuperscript{182} Djuff and Morrison, \textit{View with a Room}, 13.
served at the rate of seventy cents each, and a number of wooden walled tents each equipped with comfortable beds, immaculate linens and plenty of warm blankets to protect tourists on cool nights.” Dining tents came equipped “with a heater and plenty of chairs and tables in which to lounge and rest after a pleasant day in the saddle.” Despite these civilized refinements, tourists were forbidden to bring more luggage than their saddle-horses could carry, an explicit reminder that they were not staying in a resort hotel and were choosing to yield some comfort for the experience. This admonition was minimized in the article that quickly moved on to the majestic scenery of the park.  

In describing the natural beauty that tourists were supposed to experience, the article offered insight into the tension between the Great Northern and the hotel proprietors in Belton. Since the article was essentially an advertisement for the Great Northern, it promoted the scenery on the eastern slopes of the park while simultaneously marginalizing the majesty of the Western scenery, stating that the beauty on the eastern slopes of Rocky Mountains, “far surpasses that on the Western slopes.” In addition, the article never named any of the Western hotel proprietors, saying only that “small launches can be taken to the foot of the lake [i.e. Apgar], where stage will carry tourists over the new government road to the Great Northern chalet at Belton.”  

Ignoring the scenery and the businesses in Belton was a contrived marketing decision that guided tourists’ vacation plans toward Hill’s hotels and away from his competitors.

Hill understood that his Belton Chalet complex was primarily a symbol of Great Northern’s presence in the McDonald Valley and that his company’s economic future

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185 Ibid.
was limited there because the established proprietors were fiercely protective of their property rights around Lake McDonald. Instead of competing with the established businessmen on the west side of Glacier National Park, he decided to focus nearly all his attention in developing the infrastructure on the Park’s east side. He started by locating a suitable place for a train depot and hotel similar to Belton, choosing Midvale (later East Glacier), an obscure town with around one hundred people and originally located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Since the plot of land he wanted to purchase was on the reservation and not for sale, he could not buy it outright, but used his influence over a Montana Senator to push a bill through Congress, appropriating to the Great Northern 160 acres of the reserve. The bill passed in February 1912, and by June 13, 1913, Hill’s first hotel in East Glacier, the Glacier Park Hotel, opened to the public.\footnote{Djuff and Morrison, \textit{View with a Room}, 29-31; Newell, Walter, and McDonald, “Historic Resources Study,” 210.}

The Glacier Park Hotel (Figure 7) embodied Hill’s image and vision for Glacier National Park. His idea of rustic charm harmoniously mixing with European sophistication was manifested in the hotel’s architecture, landscape, and employees. One promotional brochure stated, “Here [Glacier Park Hotel] the east and the west meet, the American and the European, finding pleasure in the associations with bronzed and hardy mountaineers.”\footnote{Great Northern Railway, \textit{Hotels and Tours: Glacier National Park} (St. Paul, Minn: Great Northern Railway, 1914), 6.} Another brochure advertised the hotel as “a magnificent three-story log structure, unique among tourist hotels in America, electric lighted and steam heated,… combining in its rustic interior all the creature comforts and luxuries of the
Western pioneering and wilderness motifs were reflected in the hotel's "Forest Lobby," a three story enclosed courtyard supported by fir-tree pillars four feet thick and decorated with Blackfeet Indian rugs, oak furniture, tree-trunk lamp stands and an open campfire set up on a bed of stones (Figure 8). European comfort was found in the conveniences that included telephone booths, a drug store, a cigar stand, a railroad ticket office, a haberdasher, and a restaurant.189

The Great Northern built a second hotel, the Many Glacier Hotel, at Lake McDermott190 that opened to the public on July 4, 1915. Designed by the same architects, the Many Glacier Hotel reflected the meeting of west and east more conspicuously. While drawing on the imagery established in the Glacier Park Hotel like a forest lobby with tree-trunk columns, rustic wooden furniture, animal skins and trophies, Indian rugs on the walls, and an open-hearth fire, the Many Glacier Hotel exterior was modeled explicitly on Swiss architecture (Figure 9).

The hotel had a stone foundation surmounted by four stories with gabled roofs and clapboards stained dark brown with yellow trim and carved balconies with Swiss detailing.191 In addition to these hotels, the company also constructed a series of chalet complexes and camps at St. Mary, Going-to-the-Sun Camp, Two Medicine, Cut Bank, Granite Park, and Gunsight Lake, of which the Going-to-the-Sun Camp became an especially favorite destination for tourists.

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188 Great Northern Railway, Western Trips for Eastern People: West Bound Round Trip Summer Fares (St. Paul, Minn: Great Northern Railway, 1914), 7.
189 Shaffer, See America First, 62-63.
190 Lake McDermott later became Swiftcurrent Lake.
191 Shaffer, See America First, 72; Djuff and Morrison, View with a Room, 83-102.
Figure 7. Glacier Park Hotel (Fred Kiser, in Great Northern Railway, *Glacier National Park*, St. Paul, MN: Great Northern Railway, 1921, 2).

Figure 8. Lobby of the Glacier Park Hotel ([1920], Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Great Northern Railway Records, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN).
Figure 9. Many Glacier Hotel (Great Northern Railway, *Glacier National Park: Hotel and Tours*, St. Paul, MN: Great Northern Railway, 1917, 19).

In 1912, the Geographic Society of Chicago wrote a guidebook about Glacier National Park with the following description of the Going-to-the-Sun Camp:

If you must be held up anywhere in the Park by storms or other adversity, pray that it may be at Going-to-the-Sun Camp on St. Mary Lake...We found a host and hostess unaware of approach\textsuperscript{192} but undismayed at the prospect of preparing dinner for seventeen. While it was being prepared we sought our quarters in the chalets and again found ourselves exclaiming in superlatives over the panorama. The chalets are on a steep promontory about one hundred feet high, which projects so far into the water as to give the perfect view of the lake whether looking up toward its head or down towards the lowlands.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{192} This party took the more unusual west to east route and rode horseback over the mountains. They did not arrive by launch.

The Going-to-the-Sun Camp was the ultimate expression in Hill’s vision of Glacier’s landscape. Located near the head of and constructed a hundred feet above Upper St. Mary Lake, this small Alpine village, sometimes referred to as “Sun Camp,” was the largest of Glacier’s chalet complex, offered some of the most dramatic vistas in the area. The chalets consciously evoked the image of Swiss Alps through its architecture (Figure 10). When first built in 1912, the complex included a kitchen/dining room, fine one-room cabins, and a two-story log cabin complete with lounging rooms on both levels, able to accommodate 38 guests. Continual renovations through 1915 produced an enlarged dining room, a laundry room, and two spacious guest dormitory chalets that increased sleeping capacity to 200 people. For the year of 1915, the Sun Camp accommodated approximately 2,814 overnight guests plus many more “day-trippers,” who arrived by boat for lunch and then returned to the foot of St. Mary Lake.

The Going-to-the-Sun Camp became a hub for day-time activities for an eclectic crowd of travelers. Horseback riders, fishermen, hikers just off the trail, and well-to-do day-trippers came together at the chalets where they ate, made friends, and found some unexpected surprise amenities, such as access to a resident nurse, a telephone, telegraph communications, and workers dressed in Swiss-styled costumes (Figure 11). This final “surprise” of Americans working in Swiss outfits heightened the feeling for tourists that Glacier National Park was an authentic Alpine destination by connecting it to Europe’s more established customs and heritage.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{194} Djuff and Morrison, \textit{View with a Room}, 73.
Figure 10. Launch traveling to Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. Notice the Swiss style of architecture for the camp’s buildings (T. J. Hileman, circa 1920, Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

Figure 11. Dining Room Staff dresses in “Alpine uniform” (Great Northern Railway, Glacier National Park, St. Paul, MN: Great Northern Railway, 1917, 25).
and as helpful as possible. Although other leaders of large companies like the Great Northern Railway might not concern themselves with such details, such as employees’ costumes and working parameters, Hill was involved with nearly every aspect of developing the Park from selecting sites for his hotels and roads to bulb selection for his flower beds.\textsuperscript{195} Under his direction, the Great Northern constructed Glacier’s landscape by building hotels, camps, and an improved road system that connected his lodgings from Midvale to Many Glacier and became known as the Blackfoot Highway. While the cost for all this construction was considerable, the company’s investment in the Park’s infrastructure was rewarded as visitation increased 650\% between 1910 and 1915. All this development and investment in Glacier National Park’s infrastructure would have been an expensive waste, however, if Hill had not simultaneously embarked on a marketing campaign that became the standard against which all other railroad promotional campaigns were compared.\textsuperscript{196}

In creating his public relations campaign, Hill built and constructed the image of Glacier through place promotion. He first tied Glacier to the “See America First”

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid; Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 63, 67.  
\textsuperscript{196} Newell, Walter, and McDonald, “Historic Resources Study,” 208-209; Walter, “Glacier Park in 1915,” 22.; Guthrie, \textit{All Aboard!}, 60.
campaign that began in 1906. Rooted in sentiments of patriotism and nationalism, the slogan, "See America First," reminded Americans, particularly Easterners, to invest their attention and their money in the scenic wonders of the United States. Hill once stated that "Americans spend millions of dollars in Europe each year to see sights which are already equaled in this country. The need to be educated to realize this, and Glacier National Park should go far to help the 'See America First Movement.' On May 25, 1910, the Great Northern Railway constructed a twenty-by-fifteen-foot billboard in St. Paul, Minnesota, showing Lake McDonald and its surrounding mountains with the slogan, "See America First," superimposed across the top. A local paper reported that two hundred billboards, depicting twenty different scenes, were built in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Buffalo. These billboards were one component of a multimedia advertising campaign to attract tourists to Glacier. Every Great Northern advertisement displayed the "See America First" emblem along with photographic images of scenes throughout the Park. Results of this campaign were quite effective: of 9,400 out-of-state visitors to the Park in 1915, almost one-third came from New York, Illinois, and Minnesota.\(^{199}\)

\(^{197}\) Walter, "Glacier Park in 1915," 22. On 25 January 1906, Western businessmen, boosters, and politicians gathered in Salt Lake City, Utah, for three days to attend the "See America First Conference," a movement to inform the public of the advantages of visiting America's natural scenery opposed to traveling overseas to Europe. "See Europe if you will, but See America First," was a rallying cry that emphasized the wonders of the West and pointed out that Americans were "un-patriotically" spending more money on European tours than in the United States. This slogan received immediate and enthusiastic support, but ultimately was short-lived and failed to develop into an institutionalized league that would be responsible for the promotion and advertising of the intermountain West. The slogan, however, was resurrected through other tourism businesses and advocates, such as the Great Northern Railway. Shaffer, *See America First*, 26-31.


In thousands of newspaper articles, pamphlets, posters, billboards, and brochures, Hill represented Glacier Park’s natural and cultural landscape with dramatic and oft-repeated visual symbols that were designed to represent a unified and alluring ideal of the region. In constructing this iconography, he carefully chose themes that were easily identifiable by and resonated with the discerning consumers. Simultaneously he juxtaposed the Park’s “wildness” and “frontier” heritage with modern comforts and amenities. From 1911 to 1930, three themes dominated his promotional campaign compromised seventy-seven percent of the visual imagery of the Park’s landscape: Native Americans, natural scenery, and recreation. By far the most depicted image used by the Great Northern Railway was the Native American, particularly the Blackfeet Indians.

Brochures showing the Blackfeet in traditional dress gathered around tepees represented a pristine environment, unspoiled by industrial or urban pollution (Figure 12). This imagery also created authenticity for Glacier National Park where tourists could see and experience real Indians, just like in the “Old West.” A 1914 guidebook stated that the Blackfeet “were one of the last tribes to come in contact with the white man and still retain most of their primitive customs and manner living. Tourists are afforded an excellent opportunity to observe their rites and ceremonies.” The company was careful, however, to juxtapose the Blackfeet’s primitive imagery with other images of the Blackfeet as a friendly and modern Indians. Native Americans in full dress were

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201 Shafer, *See America First*, 68-69.
202 Great Northern Railway, *Hotels and Tours*, 3.
shown playing golf, operating telephone switchboards, celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas, and traveling to American cities, where they talked to Americans about their culture. They became part of Glacier’s landscape. They greeted tourists off the train at the Midvale station, acted as tour guides, and were paid to camp in tepees in front of the Glacier Park Hotel. Through the Great Northern advertising, the Blackfeet were packaged and sold to tourists as “noble savages,” who were shown contemplating nature, innocent of the evils associated with the industrialized world. They became objects on display as much as the natural scenery.

This commodification of the Blackfeet reinforced an unspoken ideology held by white tourists about the natural order of society: a sophisticated white culture had
conquered and “civilized” a wild, primitive race that was allowed to maintain its
different lifestyle under the condition that this “other” race properly interacted with its
benevolent superiors who were curious about this exotic other culture. Since Anglo-
American tourists perceived themselves as observers or invited participants of Native
American rituals (not as conquerors), their intrusion into traditional rituals was given an
air of legitimacy. Despite such an anthropological façade, tourists were consuming their
ideal of appropriate racial hierarchy, and their views were reflected in the photographs
and images produced by the Great Northern’s publicity campaign.

In addition to Native American iconography, the railroad company also used
images of Glacier’s natural scenery and wildlife to propagate tourists’ belief in Anglo-
American superiority over other geographies, such as those found in Europe. The
landscape of Glacier’s Rocky Mountains was spacious, wild, and on a larger scale than
anything tourists experienced in the East. Dramatic images of serrated mountains, deep
flower-filled valleys, and forests of native pine and fir trees made Glacier’s landscape
seem pristine and unspoiled. Photographs of animals like bears, big horn sheep, and
mountain goats evoked metaphors of freedom. Pictures of the Park’s water landscapes
like lakes, waterfalls, and streams were perfect symbols of the harmonious co-existence
between the wildness of West with the familiar civility of the European landscape.

Early brochures prominently featured Alpine lakes, streams, and waterfalls on
their covers and throughout their pages. These watery landscapes embodied Hill’s
metaphor of Glacier as “America’s Little Switzerland.” Lakes hidden in the mountains
away from the exploitation of industry conveyed an aesthetic that echoed notions of
European Romanticism during which nature was an object of deification, an earthly physical manifestation of the divine and beautiful. Hill trusted that the American consumer would make a connection between Glacier’s and Europe’s mountain landscapes and would realize that Glacier was equal to if not better than Europe as a place to escape the stresses of the mundane and to reconnect with a more pure and sublime world.  

Between 1911 and 1920, most images of Glacier National Park were scenic pictures. Photographs of towering mountains, shimmering streams, cascading waterfalls, or rippling Alpine lakes were ineffective without the presence of humanity, however, or more specifically humans enjoying or exploiting such scenery through activities like hiking, horseback riding, fishing, or simply relaxing. These activities reinforced a pioneering metaphor that the Great Northern consistently constructed by placing pictures of Glacier’s wild, frontier-like landscape conquered, tamed, and civilized by adventurous and hearty Anglo-Americans. The rustic construction of the Glacier Park Hotel and subsequent lodgings, animal skins decorating the walls of these accommodations, friendly Blackfeet greeting and allowing tourists to observe their “primitive” customs and rituals, and people walking on high mountain tops or feeding wild animals were symbols of conquest. By constructing images of an imagined and idealized past that sanitized the disingenuous and awful deeds of the Anglo-Americans as they conquered the frontier, the Great Northern encouraged white upper- and middle-class tourists to identify with that

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203 Wyckoff and Dilsaver, “Promotional Imagery,” 23.
204 Ibid., 8.
triumph and to recognize that they were the legitimate heirs of this frontier heritage.\textsuperscript{205} Tourists who traveled to Glacier on the Great Northern were performing their civic and national duty and were expressing the spirit of America, and being “true” Americans, by interacting with the natural landscape and native inhabitants like their pioneer forbearers.

The final extension of this pioneer metaphor of conquering and participating in the wild frontier was expressed through recreation. In addition to images of natural scenery, wildlife, and the Blackfeet Indians, the Great Northern used recreation to assure tourists of their right to be in the Park. Pictures of people enjoying themselves in and on Glacier’s landscape meant that the Park was suitably civilized for Easterners to relax and to enjoy themselves without the hardships of their frontier ancestors. People wanted to experience a natural and pristine environment without struggling against the harsh conditions of nature. They wanted to connect to their pioneer heritage without suffering the exhausting labor and trials necessary to settle a frontier. Recreation imagery emphasized that the undesirable work of conquering the frontier was finished, and tourists now could enjoy a more civilized version of nature. During Glacier’s early years, recreational activities focused on the Park’s lakes and their uses.

While Great Northern brochures displayed colossal mountains and pristine lakes, producing images of wild and foreign landscapes, they also placed in the photographs subtle symbols of human industry and technology and therefore, symbols of human control and dominion over the wilderness: boats. Small launches, plying the mountain lakes or stationed prominently at dock landings, were used as a testament of human’s

\textsuperscript{205} Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 68.
dominion over nature (Figures 13 and 14). Their images also symbolized the romance of
the water, themes that resonated with Eastern elites. Like Swiss chalets, Eastern tourists
were familiar with launches as recreation and tourism vehicles.

Beginning in Britain in the 1860s, launches were considered gentlemen’s water
vehicles and were used as ceremonial and pleasure boats. In America, the number of
launches rose during the 1870s and 1880s as an increasing number of middle-class and
small businessmen had enough money to purchase vessels for recreation after a 60- to 70-
hour work week, and as launches were the first mechanically powered playthings
affordable to a large number of consumers. They were increasingly found on lake
resorts in New England and in the Midwest. In 1893, launches were one of the most
popular attractions at the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago where rides were
offered to over a million passengers. By the turn of the century, magazine articles
claimed that motorized boating was the “latest fad,” that even transcended gender:

A motorboat is the New York girl’s latest fad, and many society girls are
going in for this exhilarating sport, following the example of the first
water cheauffeur [sic], Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt Jr. The great motor
ing’s wife named her craft Hard Boiled Egg, because it couldn’t be
beaten.

While a large proportion of these launches were private pleasure boats, they usually
reflected middle-class values in their fundamental design.

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207 William C. Swanson, foreword to Launches and Yachts: the 1902 Elco Catalog (Waldorf, MD:
209 Mitchell, The Steam Launch, 29.
Figure 13. Launch St. Mary running on St. Mary Lake towards dock ([n.d.], Courtesy of Minnesotan Historical Society Special Collections, Great Northern Railway Records, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN).

Figure 14. Launch St. Mary docked below Going-to-the-Sun Chalets (T.J. Hileman, [n.d.], Courtesy of Glacier National Historical Collections, West Glacier, MT).
Hill and the Great Northern relied on their customers making connections between the launches pictured on Glacier’s lakes and the comfort and relaxation they felt in these boats on Eastern waterways. The railroad’s marketing campaign used every visual technique to create such a connection, however. Photographs in brochures usually showed launches carrying well-dressed individuals to their comfortable and civilized accommodations (Figure 15). The Great Northern photographs became a canon of visual rhetoric that instructed visitors how to see and experience the Park’s natural beauty and recreational possibilities.  

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Figure 15. *St. Mary* carrying passengers up St. Mary Lake to Going-to-the-Sun Camp (T. J. Hileman, n.d., Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

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\(^{210}\text{Wyckoff and Dilsaver, “Promotional Images,” 23.}\)
In the early years before roads were adequate for consumer travel, Glacier Park relied heavily on the use of these launches to symbolize comfortable travel in the park. In 1914, the Great Northern offered one- to seven-day tours for various prices. This was established for travelers with “limited time at their disposal in which to enjoy its [Glacier’s] scenic attractions.”\(^{211}\) While the longer trips involved horseback riding and hiking, the one-day trip for the consumer with little time or perhaps little energy was advertised thus:

Leaving Glacier Park [Hotel] at 8:30 a.m., the sightseer travels in comfortable touring cars over the thirty-six mile automobile highway...to St. Mary Camp on St. Mary Lake, where a commodious seventy-five passenger launch is boarded for Going-to-the-Sun Camp, ten miles distant on St. Mary Lake...The return trip is made in the afternoon, arriving at Glacier Park Hotel at 6:00 p.m. A ninety mile panorama of scenic splendor unfolds itself to the eye of the tourist on this short one day trip.\(^{212}\)

The Great Northern also offered trips where Park rangers gave presentations, either at the chalets, on a hike, or aboard a launch traveling around the lake, because the company understood informed consumers tended to stay longer in the area.\(^{213}\) No matter which package the tourist chose, each included the trip aboard a launch from St. Mary Chalets to Going-to-the-Sun Camp, the premier destination for lake tourism on the eastern side of Glacier Park.

Since the Going-to-the-Sun Camp was located at the head of St. Mary Lake, the only feasible way to reach it was by boat, which sometimes created problems if the weather turned bad, as reported again by the Chicago Geographic Society:

\(^{211}\) The Great Northern Railway, *Western Trips for Eastern Peoples*, 7.
\(^{212}\) Ibid.
\(^{213}\) Duff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 74-75.
We were to have taken the launch down to Lower St. Mary but the Wind Maker of the Blackfeet, Underwater Persons, who lives under the head of Upper St. Mary, had been making the waves to roll and the winds to blow and the voyage unsafe for a small boat.  

This problem, however, was remedied as new and larger launches were added to the fleet and marketed in the promotional brochures. If weather did force a delay, however, tourists found time for impromptu relaxation. For example, delayed members of the Chicago Geographic Society "enjoying a ledge of rock with tufted ferns and saxifrage making a soft couch and the waves lapping down below...kept warm and comfortable by a camp fire and the Navajo rugs...sang our hearts out in a varied repertoire that gave the singers much satisfaction and did no permanent damage to the promontory."

This outdoor experience and leisure was exactly the activity Hill envisioned for the lake tourism around Glacier. The lakes provided a way for overstressed Americans to escape and revive their spirits by consuming the outdoor recreational opportunities that were shaped and promoted through the Great Northern’s publicity campaign. As an active outdoorsman, Hill promoted Glacier as the ultimate outdoor playground, constructing visual images that displayed Americans active in healthy outdoor lifestyles associated with the lakes: hiking around lakes, fishing in streams, or comfortably enjoying a ride to the next trail head or hotel.  

In promotional literature, fishing predominated as an adventurous and safe commodity of easy consumption in Glacier’s lakes.

214 Geographic Society of Chicago, *In Glacier National Park*, [16].
215 Ibid., [16-18]
216 Wyckoff and Dilsaver, “Promotional Imagery,” 16.
Photographs captured people holding strings of fish (Figure 16), and brochures described the lakes and streams as a fisherman’s paradise. One brochure stated, “Trout are found here in greater abundance than in perhaps any other waters in America...Bull and Mackinaw weighing up to 20 pounds...are found mostly in St. Mary Lake.”

Other promotional literature touted fishing tours, gave descriptions of the types of fish found at each lake, and enticed would-be tourists with such evocative titles as “Where the fighting trout leap high.” Other lake recreational activities were promoted, but not as vigorously. For example, most brochures offered rates to rent canoes or rowboats. Photographs showed individuals or families stealing away on the lake for some alone or quality time by themselves, contemplating nature. Images in brochures, pamphlets, and postcards were not the only weapons in the Great Northern’s massive publicity campaign promoting the amenities of Glacier Park. The railroad also courted writers and societies, particularly geographic societies like the Geography Society of Chicago, to visit and publish their experiences. One of the most articulate and effective writers was Mary Roberts Rinehart.

Having achieved fame as an author of short stories, comedies, and thrillers, Rinehart was invited by the Great Northern Railroad to participate in a three hundred mile trek across Glacier’s landscape along with 40 other people in 1915. Led by noted Western outdoorsman, Howard Eaton, she chronicled her journey in a short narrative, *Glacier Park in 1915*. This book encompassed everything the Great Northern wanted promoted in Glacier Park. In describing Glacier’s scenery and her experiences, she filled

\[217\] *Great Northern Railway, Hotels & Tours*, 21.
\[218\] Ibid.
her account with descriptions of self-awakening, spiritual epiphany, self-empowerment, patriotism, and a connection to the heritage of the Old West and to a pioneering spirit that Americans felt was a birthright. “Roughing it” on the trail forced the softness of civilization out of her body and soul, leaving a healthier, pure, “natural” state of being that felt not only harmonious with nature, but paradoxically able to conquer it. She felt “a sense of achievement; of conquering the unconquerable; of pitting human wits against giants and winning – a sporting chance…every mile is an achievement…once you’ve
overcome initial tests of wilderness, the lure of high places is in your blood. The call of
the mountains is a real call."²¹⁹

This first book ultimately became a guidebook to Glacier National Park, and Hill
was so pleased with it he invited Rinehart back to Glacier a few years later to pen another
book, Tenting To-night. In this second narrative, she focused less on overarching themes,
such as patriotism and self-improvement through the test of nature, and provided specific
details on recreational opportunities available in the area, particularly fishing and rafting
in Glacier’s streams and lakes. She wrote that at Bowman Lake in Glacier, she caught
“sixty-nine cut-throat trout averaging a pound each, and this without knowing where to
look,”²²⁰ and that on the Flathead River her group caught more than fifty trout, ranging
from one-half pound to four pounds with more left to catch.²²¹ She continued to relay the
adventure and fun inherent in the Park (consistent with Hill’s view that Glacier was an
outdoor playground) when she described running the rapids of the Flathead River:

There is a thrill and exultation about running rapids – not for minutes, not
for an hour or two, but for days – that gets into the blood. And when to
that exultation is added the most beautiful scenery in America, the trip
becomes well worth while.²²²

In addition to Rinehart, Hill and the Great Northern courted other authors who
highlighted and promoted the park through their writing. In return for favorable prose,
the railroad company subsidized their trips and promoted their books and articles. The
company also hired painters and photographers to document various images that would

²¹⁹ Rinehart, Through Glacier Park in 1915, 24.
²²⁰ Rinehart, Tenting To-Night, 38.
²²¹ Ibid., 73
²²² Ibid., 84-85.
symbolize Glacier.\textsuperscript{223} Through the late teens and early twenties, the Great Northern’s publicity department continually evolved, producing more sophisticated and detailed guidebooks and travel brochures.

By 1917, detailed descriptions of new and improved chalet complexes at Two Medicine Lake were featured next to a panoramic photograph of Two Medicine Valley that guided the consumer’s vision of all the romantic possibilities at the Park like hiking, boating, fishing, or simply lounging on the chalet’s veranda (Figure 17). In this same brochure, the transportation system was displayed more prominently. Cars on respectable-looking roads traveled together. People crowded the deck of a nicely lined launch reflected clearly in the water. For the more adventurous, a nice horseback ride awaited. Swiss styled hotels were set against an amazing backdrop of pine tree forested mountains, evoking images of European splendor and romanticism. Finally, “As-You-Please” tours more explicitly detailed day-to-day activities. Ironically these tours were advertised as increasing people’s travel choices, but were really mechanisms to control visitors’ movements and experiences.\textsuperscript{224}

Although World War I hurt Glacier’s attendance and the marketing for the year of 1918 was curtailed, the early twenties saw further evolution and processing of Glacier as a marketable commodity. The Great Northern produced more sophisticated brochures that offered clearer pictures and maps of the Park. It also more forcefully directed the reader’s journey through Glacier Park. Depending on which entrance an individual

\textsuperscript{223} Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 80-82.

\textsuperscript{224} The Great Northern Railway, \textit{Glacier National Park: Hotel and Tours} (St. Paul, MN: The Great Northern Railway, 1917).
Figure 17. View from chalet at Two Medicine Lake. Mount Rockwell is in the background (The Great Northern Railway Company, Glacier National Park: Hotels and Tours, 1917, 9).

entered Glacier, a prescribed path was laid, stating what they were expected to witness, experience, and feel. The different hotels provided consumers greater information about their amenities and costs. Transportation schedules, itineraries, and fees were coordinated with hourly precision.225 Specific times for pick-up, transportation, and even baggage fees were included in the advertisements.226 The irony was, of course, that as the brochures offered more choices, they were actually more controlling of the tourist’s experience and therefore could better control the result of their product.

225 The Great Northern Railway, Glacier National Park, 1919-1922.
226 The Great Northern Railway, Glacier National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park: Season June 15th to September 15th 1927, 1927.
Product was important to the Great Northern and particularly to Hill who crafted Glacier’s image from his dream of Glacier National Park as an American sanctuary.\textsuperscript{227} Although Hill marketed Glacier as a destination for everyone regardless of finances, he had a particular consumer in mind while designing Glacier’s natural and constructed landscape. With ideals of class structure embedded in the landscape, Hill spoke to the elites who commonly traveled to Europe. The Park was his rustic refuge from the soul-corrupting influence of industrialization, and he wanted to share its opportunities with the elite.

As an avid outdoorsman, who hunted, fished, dabbled in scenic photography, landscape painting and gardening, Hill’s hobbies reflected the interests of a society increasingly fascinated by the benefits of outdoor life and nature appreciation. Hill and many other elites of the early twentieth century came to define the wilderness as an alluring alternative to the decline and decay of modern industrialized society. Many elites romanticized wilderness as a temporary refuge from overwhelming social, cultural, and political changes that seemed beyond their control. Growing enthusiasm for camping, hunting, fishing, all aspects of outdoor life, wilderness preservation, and nature study marked this shift. Hill’s vision of the Park grew out of these concerns. It was shaped by his ideal of wilderness as an escape from the overly civilized declining urban world. He wanted the Park to be a rustic refuge where elites like himself could regenerate.\textsuperscript{228}

\textsuperscript{227} Wyckoff and Dilsaver, “Promotional Images,” 4.
\textsuperscript{228} Shaffer, \textit{See America First}, 63-65.
Glacier's lakes came to symbolize America's version of Swiss Alpine communities. Pleasant lodges with all the conveniences welcomed all types of trekkers, tired from a full day of enjoying outdoor recreational activities, whether that was hiking, fishing, horseback riding, or touring lakes in style and comfort on a launch. They were promoted as better than any European mountain lake primarily because they were American. Everything the discerning consumers could want could be found in their own back yard. Glacier's lakes symbolized not only a place to escape and find solace from the stresses of civilized world, but also a place to mingle with like-minded people, who also were escaping from those same stresses. The lakes became a hub of social gatherings and parties, but these activities were nothing new. Lake McDonald had been a hub of social activity since the first settlers arrived in the area around 1892 and had participated in lake tourism activities since 1895.

The Great Northern was curiously silent, however, about Lake McDonald's tourism businesses. In fact, early promotional brochures produced by the Great Northern barely mentioned Lake McDonald. It was not until the early twenties that their brochures provided description of Lewis's Hotel on Lake McDonald. This silence was more peculiar since the west side of Glacier had the more mature tourism facilities, but that was precisely the point. The early accommodations and established lake tourism meant that the Great Northern had limited influence on the west side of Glacier; and this situation created conflict and tension between the Great Northern and west-side proprietors.
CHAPTER IV: EXPLOITING THE LAKES: THE INDIVIDUALS AND VESSELS THAT SHAPED LAKE TOURISM IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

As vociferous as Great Northern was in promoting the tourist industry on the eastern side of Glacier during the early years of the Park’s existence, it was almost as silent in advertising the tourist businesses and services offered on the Western side, especially around Lake McDonald. Although Glacier tourism first developed around Lake McDonald, the Great Northern barely acknowledged the tourism businesses operating around the lake from 1910 to 1920. It made passing references to the Lewis Hotel in its pamphlets and put the hotel’s location on its maps, but the railway did not mention other accommodations, such as the log cabins at Apgar and at Kelly’s camp. Ironically, the reasons for the Great Northern’s lack of promotion were tied to the early tourism development of Lake McDonald.

The early tourism proprietors of Lake McDonald held strong landowner peculiarities, maintained a preferential right to remain in the area, acted and reacted based on their pioneering autonomy, and had little inclination to sell their holdings to or to work with corporate industries such as the Great Northern. When the Park was created in 1910, all land within the Park became property of the Department of Interior, except for persons with lands claimed before 1910 who were entitled to “full use and enjoyment of his land.”

Any further acts to secure non-patented land were considered trespassing on federal ground, and all established businesses were now under the auspice of the Park’s

superintendent. When Glacier’s first superintendent, William R. Logan, arrived in August 1910, he contrived a plan allowing the pre-existing businessmen to operate for the public, but under the Federal government’s control. There was no indication that he entertained the notion of allowing the Great Northern to establish a foothold around Lake McDonald.

Finding itself all but excluded from the Lake McDonald valley, the railroad did little to promote the area’s tourist industry. The Great Northern acknowledged a hotel at the head of the lake and a “launch service” to carry people to the foot of the lake, but marginalized these announcements in the back of its brochures. It featured its Belton Chalets prominently at the beginning of its promotional literature as “the Western gateway to Glacier National Park.” The railroad de-emphasized Belton to such a degree that a 1917 brochure advertising a choice of two types of tours varying from one to thirteen days of touring did not include a single opportunity for travelers to visit the Lake McDonald area. For the Eastern tourist, the west side of Glacier National Park was merely a hard-to-reach transition point from a horse trail to the Great Northern’s Belton Chalets.

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231 Ibid., 13.
232 The Great Northern Railway, *Western Trips for Eastern People*, 1914
233 The two types of tours were the “Parks Scheduled Tours,” and “As-You-Please Tours.” The former were designed primarily for tourists with limited time in Glacier. The latter were offered to tourists who had more time to explore and experience the Park’s various trails and routes (The Great Northern Railway, *Glacier National Park: Hotels and Tours*, 1917, 21).
By 1915, however, the Lewis Hotel was much more than a transition point; it was a busy hub of social events and tourist activities on the lake. After her long trek across the Continental Divide with Howard Eaton, Rinehart wrote the following about the hotel:

The trail led past a corral, past a vegetable garden such as our Eastern eyes had seldom seen... Then the Glacier Hotel at Lake McDonald, generally known as "Lewis's"... Great strawberries were ripening in the garden. Our horses got oats, all they could eat. In a pool in front of the hotel lazy trout drifted about. There was good food. Again there were people dressed in civilized raiment who looked at us and our shabby riding clothes with a disdain not unmixed with awe. There was fox-trotting and one-stepping, in riding boots, with an orchestra... There were hot fried trout, sandwiches, chips of dried meat – buffalo and deer... There was beer... It was extraordinary, hospitable, lavish, and – western.235

A telling statement in this description was the reaction of the people in "civilized raiment" to Rinehart's group straight from the trail. The mix of "disdain" and "awe" indicated the Lewis Hotel was not simply a rustic outpost, suitable only for quick transitions to Belton. It was a place of refinement and civilized society, and Lewis worked hard to construct this image, determined not to be outdone by the Great Northern building projects.236

After making minor improvements to the hotel in 1908, Lewis began an ambitious reconstruction project in October 1913. For ten months, a "small army of workmen" labored intensely, excavating and pouring concrete before the winter snows, freighting fixtures, furnishings, and other materials over the ice of Lake McDonald during the winter and by boat in the spring. The eventual result was a log three-story hotel with 100 rooms equipped with steam heat, electric lighting, and running water. Lewis imported

235 Roberts, Glacier Park in 1915, 60-62.
236 Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 29
hickory furniture from the east to put on the main floor, and the lobby was reserved as a showplace for incoming tourists. He decorated the walls with animal skins and trophy heads from his fur trading businesses. Finally, Lewis had contractors install an elevator that took guests to a roof garden that overlooked Lake McDonald. The new Lewis Glacier Hotel officially opened on June 14, 1914 with a large commemoration reported in the Kalispell Daily Inter Lake:

Lewis planned a big celebration to take place at his hotel lasting two days and nights. Plenty of novelty amusements were included: 50 ft. high dive, bronco busting, roping contests, packing contests by Park guides, men’s and ladies’ foot races, swimming, boating and canoe contests as well as evening fireworks displays.

Yet none of these festivities was mentioned in the Great Northern’s promotional brochures for 1914.

The social gatherings and lake tourism around Lake McDonald were a natural highlight for the Great Northern’s targeted audience of sophisticated Easterners, looking for refinement against the harsh, pioneering backdrop of the Rocky Mountain West—without suffering too much discomfort in the process. While Lewis sponsored, hosted, and rented his hotel for dances and social gatherings such as sewing and temperance meetings, making the Lewis Hotel the epicenter of social activity on the lake, it was Lake McDonald that was the real star.

Local residents and tourists who returned season after season poignantly recounted the pleasure they derived from the recreational opportunities at the lake. Cora

238 Ibid.
Hutchings, a Lake McDonald resident whose husband was superintendent of the Park for a short time in 1912, remembered “the abundance of game, the wild flowers, the Lake McDonald Mountains, and the fact that we could at any time catch more trout than we knew what to do with.” Margaret Lindsay, a perennial visitor to the lake, stated that she “spent many wonderful days swimming, riding and rowing over to the...Lewis Hotel where we met very lovely people...” Another resident said, “Each summer a bunch of tourists, together with Mr. Eaton and guides, would ride up to the Lake McDonald Hotel for a day or two. This was usually the event of the summer. This crowd...would gather and fill the hotel lobby for an evening of reminiscences and storytelling.” One of the most touching recollections was a letter describing a World War I veteran who found comfort and peace in the atmosphere at the lake:

The name Apgar will always bring back the happiest of memories to us three Pratts. We had come out from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, to visit my brother on his ranch in eastern Montana shortly after Col. Pratt had returned home at the end of World War I. My brother suggested we should visit Lake McDonald before we started back to Kansas. Mrs. Apgar had five comfortable little log cabins facing the lake and we were fortunate to get the last one near McDonald Creek, where we could watch deer crossing in the evening. The quietness of the majestic forest surrounding us and the peace and beauty of the lake and mountains was to Col. Pratt like stepping out of hell into heaven.

...Our ten year old boy got the thrill of his life when he and his father went down the river on a fishing trip with Charlie Howe who had wonderful tales to tell of happenings around Lake McDonald. I wish they could be written in a book for others to enjoy.

...I overheard a lady remark one evening while a number of us were sitting out on the balcony at the hotel, “Sister, we have seen all the beauties of

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239 Hutchings to Harrington, in “History of Apgar,” 2.
Switzerland, but nothing compares with looking up Lake McDonald in the Garden Wall.\footnote{Colonel and Mrs. Raymond S. Pratt to Leona Harrington, [n.d.] in “History of Apgar,” 33.}

This was exactly the image the Great Northern wanted to promote of Glacier: an American oasis superior to European scenery where American heroes and citizens could find solace and their slice of “heaven.” The railroad company, however, barely mentioned the lake and its recreational and social opportunities in promotional literature. A 1914 brochure allowed only two sentences to describe the fishing in Lake McDonald and surrounding waters, “Good fishing may be had at all times in Lake McDonald. McDonald Creek and Avalanche Lake may also be fished with excellent results.”\footnote{The Great Northern Railway, \textit{Hotels and Tours}, 1914, 21.} This meager advertisement was juxtaposed against all the descriptions of Glacier’s eastern lakes that flowed with superlatives about the unique and rewarding fishing experiences within easy reach of the company’s hotels and camps. At the same time, the Great Northern advertised other lake recreational activities like renting rowboats and canoes on the east-side lakes, primarily at St. Mary Lake. The company, however, never published these activities were in the McDonald Valley, nor did it acknowledge Charlie Howe’s unique service of taking tourists on guided float trips down the Flathead River.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Great Northern also ignored Lake McDonald’s transportation services. Although it provided tourists with sizes, carrying capacities, fees and almost hourly schedules of various launches operating on St. Mary Lake, the railroad made only passing references to a “launch service” that operated from the Lewis Hotel to the foot of the lake for a certain rate and without mentioning even an abstract description of operating
schedules. This omission was even more glaring since Lake McDonald had the first
launch to operate in Glacier, the *F.I. Whitney*, the first fleet of launches in Glacier, and
had the first boat concessions granted by the federal government.

In 1911 Glacier National Park began granting concessions, giving the first permits
to Lake McDonald businessmen. The first concession (Permit No. 9) went to Orville
Denny, who was an early valley homesteader and a boat operator on Flathead Lake, and
to Frank Kelly, who had run *Emeline* on Lake McDonald since 1906. According to the
terms of the concession, they paid fifty dollars for the privilege of operating two boats
with carrying capacities of twenty-five passengers each “during the season.” They were
also to build “a new boat, having a carrying capacity of 100 persons, to meet the demands
of the public” in August 1911 that “[they] expect to have it in operation next season
[summer 1912].” The concession further stipulated the rates they were to charge.
Moreover they had to schedule their services “so that there were no delays in changing
from the stage to the boat, and vice versa, connections being made during the day with all
passenger trains on the Great Northern Railway at Belton.”

Another concession (Permit No. 18) was given to Charlie Howe for use of a
“boat” on Lake McDonald, though but this probably was not a motor boat. Compared to
Denny and Kelly’s price of fifty-dollars, Howe had to pay only five dollars for his permit.

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245 Considerable confusion surrounds the history of these early boat concessionaires since much of the
documentation of these boats came from personal interviews of contemporaries who often contradicted
each other or unintentionally mismamed certain vessels. By comparing these recollections with other
sources, a better understanding of the chronology is hopefully achieved.
246 William Logan, “Report of the Superintendent of the Glacier National Park to the Secretary of the
247 Passenger fare, one way was $ 0.75; roundtrip was $ 1.25. For trunks and baggage, the price was $ 0.50
each way (Logan, “Superintendent’s Report 1911,” 15).
Since the fee for a boat permit was based on one dollar per capita,\textsuperscript{249} Howe's boat could hold five passengers total. Howe also was known for his fishing trips down the Flathead River from his homestead and not for cruising around Lake McDonald. A long-time friend recounted that Howe used this boat to take people fishing and camping:

We had many trips together and in the winter and early spring we used to row up to the head of the lake and fish in the inlet. On these trips we packed the boat full of bedding and food to last 2-3 days.\textsuperscript{250}

Howe's boat operations were small enough that the superintendent stopped issuing permits to him, but allowed him to take tourists on fishing trips either on the lake or down the Flathead River until he moved away around 1929, after almost forty years of living in Apgar.\textsuperscript{251} Only Kelly and Denny had motorized boats on Lake McDonald in 1911:

Kelly's *Emeline*, and the *Cassie D*, a boat built, owned, and operated by Denny.

Documentation concerning the presence of the *Emeline* was ubiquitous, and many visitors to the lake had pleasant memories about her. One tourist remembered arriving at Apgar where "Mr. Kelly took charge and into the 'Emeline' we snuggled for a ride across the Lake [sic]."\textsuperscript{252} The *Cassie D* was more problematic since no one mentioned her in their recollections of Lake McDonald, and there was little other literary documentation that she was ever in Lake McDonald. In fact, one report by Mrs. Cora Hutchings, wife of one of Superintendent Logan's employees, stated that there was only

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 16. The actual policy is as follows: "Boat privileges on lakes. $25 per season for boats having a capacity of 25 persons, $50 per season for boats having a capacity of 50 persons. All boats to be subject to inspection and approval by the U.S. Steamboat Inspection Service; the rate for 1912 (to be hereafter determined) to be based upon a per capita charge for each passenger handled during 1911.\textsuperscript{250} Mrs. Bud Henderson, Apgar, to Leona Harrington, Apgar, [n.d.], in "History of Apgar," 34.\textsuperscript{251} William Logan, "Superintendent's Report 1913," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914, photocopied), 12; Henderson to Harrington, in "History of Apgar," 34.\textsuperscript{252} Margaret Lindsay, "Just a Bit of My Early Days," in "History of Apgar," "15."
one boat on the lake operated by Kelley when she arrived in the spring of 1911.\textsuperscript{253} Photographic documentation, however, showed that the \textit{Cassie D} was on Lake McDonald by 1909, but such a contradiction might have a simple explanation.

When the \textit{Emeline} was built in 1906, it was used primarily to haul freight, but was converted for passenger use around 1908.\textsuperscript{254} The following year, the first picture of the \textit{Cassie D} (Figure 18) was taken at Lake McDonald, showing it hauling a barge and void of passengers. Perhaps the \textit{Cassie D} took over the early duties of the \textit{Emeline} and became the yeoman laborer of the lake. The vessel had performed utilitarian duties in its prior history. Denny had originally operated the \textit{Cassie D} on Flathead Lake, renting it for fishing charters or hauling freight.\textsuperscript{255} It appears that Denny partnered with Kelly to secure the first concession at Lake McDonald, offering his boat to perform necessary hauling and ferrying of construction materials or timber while leaving Kelly’s \textit{Emeline} free to service tourists. If this was the agreement, there was no shortage of work for the \textit{Cassie D}.

Beginning in 1911, the Park administration began to improve the infrastructure around Lake McDonald as the Great Northern developed east side of Glacier. One of the first projects was a better dock at the foot of the lake that was built from heavy planks on pilings. A large warehouse was built in the wharf’s center. This became a central transfer point for “supplies that were hauled by wagon from Belton to Apgar and then by boat and \textit{barge} [emphasis added] up the lake. Because of the tremendous amount of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{253} Hutchings to Harrington, in “History of Apgar,” 2.
\item \textsuperscript{254} Walter, “History of Boat Operations.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 18. Frank Kelly’s boat *Cassie D* and freight barge (Eddie Cruger, 1909, Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

freight handled it was essential to have handling and storage facilities."\textsuperscript{256} The *Cassie D* was usually shown with a barge that undoubtedly handled freight for various construction projects, such as a sawmill at Fish Creek and the new Lewis Hotel. Although the exact nature of the services *Cassie D* provided, it clearly had minimal interaction with tourists relative to the *Emeline*, but it likely also ferried people during busy times of the season. These two boats, however, were insufficient to match the demand, and so the 1911 concession permitted Denny and Kelly to put another, larger launch on Lake McDonald in August 1911.\textsuperscript{257}

\textsuperscript{257} Logan, “Superintendents Report,” 1911, 10.
This new launch, *Ethel* (Figure 19), named for Kelly’s adopted daughter, carried a hundred passengers and was built for Denny and Kelly by William Swanson, who became the most influential figure in early boatbuilding in Glacier National Park. The 71 foot (22 m) boat was the first of many launches Swanson built for use on Glacier’s lakes. To construct the vessel, he shipped all materials from Kalispell to Belton by rail. Then he loaded the supplies on wagons and hauled them to the foot of the lake. With the completion of the *Ethel*, the fleet of motorized boats on Lake McDonald plateau-ed until 1915, but the partnership between Denny and Kelly did not remain static.\footnote{The biography of Captain William Swanson is discussed further beginning on page 20.\footnotemark[258]}

\footnotetext[258]{Phyllis Clark, “Cap’n Swanson – Boat Builder,” *The Daily Inter Lake* 22 July 1970}
Between the end of the 1911 season and October 1, 1912, Denny sold his interest to John Lewis, who was listed as Kelly’s partner in the second report Logan filed with the federal government. 260 Lewis and Kelly operated the three vessels for the next three years, but in 1915 they decided they needed another boat. They approached Swanson who was living in Somers, a town on Flathead Lake, and asked if they could purchase one of his boats, the City of Polson. Built in 1910, the City of Polson was “the fastest boat on the lake at that time,” 261 but due to declining passenger business on Flathead Lake, Swanson sold them his boat. One of the conditions of the sale was that Swanson had to transport the City of Polson to Lake McDonald through his own means. Since the disaster of the Oaks, 262 boats arrived at Lake McDonald on train and then were transported up to Apgar where they were launched. Deciding against this logistically complex procedure, Swanson attempted taking the City of Polson up the Flathead River and through McDonald Creek to the lake, a harrowing trip that brought “a gleam in his [Swanson’s] eye and the exciting recollections of a true adventurer,” 263 when he recounted the story.

According to Swanson, he hired a “green crew” of six men for a dollar a day to run the City of Polson up the rivers during the high water of early summer. The trip began uneventfully, but when the boat neared the ominous sounding, Bad Rock Canyon, it hit a sand bar that sent the propeller into the river. Since it was late in the day, Swanson ordered the crew to put the vessel in a nearby cove. The next morning, they

ished out the prop from the river and replaced it on the *City of Polson*, but when they tried to navigate past the bar again, the boat became held fast by the rocks and gravel. To fix this problem, Swanson sent a crewman in a rowboat to secure a line around a tree upstream. Matters worsened, however, when the man accidentally struck the *City of Polson*’s bow upon his retuning, capsizing the rowboat, and sending the crewman into the river. Although he was rescued, the rowboat was lost, and Swanson needed another day to build another boat. Once completed, the new rowboat and a more river-wise crewman freed the *City of Polson* from the bar.\textsuperscript{264}

Soon Swanson and his crew ran into the Red Lick Rapids which “some folks said we’d [Swanson and crew] never make it...through.” Swanson, however, proved the naysayers wrong by laying out “1,800 feet of steel cable” along the riverbank with small pieces of wood attached to the cable. “By starting at the upper end of the current [of the river],” Swanson explained, “it [the cable with wooden “floats”] pulled itself over the boulders...in the river between the shore and where we wanted the line.” Once they had the proper line of site, the crew attached the cable to the winch onboard the boat and wound the vessel over the rapids, surmounting them in approximately fifteen minutes.

“Then we went fishing,” Swanson glibly concluded. Before the trip was through, however, Swanson and his men had to pull the boat over fifteen more bars.\textsuperscript{265} Once at Lake McDonald, Swanson added 11 feet (3.3 m) to the boat’s 62 feet (18.9 m), and renamed her, *Lewtana* (Figure 20). The new name was possibly homage to John Lewis, combining the first three letters of “Lewis” with the last four from “Montana.”

\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.
Figure 20. Launch Lewtana on Lake McDonald ([1922], Courtesy Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

Swanson ran the Lewtana until 1916 and then went to St. Mary Lake where he eventually became the premier boat builder for Glacier’s east-side lakes for the next thirty years.266

While the Lewtana, Ethel, Emeline, and Cassie D were prominent in Lake McDonald’s lake tourism from 1915, there was one vessel conspicuously absent from accounts or concessions: the F.I. Whitney. This steam launch that was the only motor-

266 Kelly to Corson, 26 November 1960; Clark, “Cap’n Swanson,” The Daily Inter Lake, 22 July 1970.
powered vehicle for over ten years disappeared from view in the perspective of the Park's concessions, but it was still operating up to 1913 and still taking passengers according to the following account:

The first of Mrs. McDonnell, myself, and our son...to Glacier Park was in July 1913...We were thrilled by the first sight of the Lake McDonald...At the dock was the boat awaiting its load of passengers and freight, with Eddie Cruger in charge of the woodburning craft, the 'Eli [sic] Whitney', which was later wrecked on the east shore of the lake.\footnote{267}

Cruger came to the lake in 1898 and worked for John Lewis, building log cabins and working on boats and docks from 1905 through 1907.\footnote{268} Lewis probably purchased the \textit{F. I. Whitney} from Jake Walters sometime after 1907, but he never received an operation permit. The exact nature of the \textit{F.I. Whitney}'s end was unclear. Her operation on Lake McDonald seemed to end after 1915 when she disappeared from all records.\footnote{269}

The \textit{F. I. Whitney} was not the only vessel operating on Lake McDonald to be unrecognized in official documents. Another vessel, \textit{Janet}, operating on the lake in 1915 was government owned and therefore did not need a federal permit like private concessionaires. Her origins, builder, and operator have remained a mystery, but there were various accounts of passengers riding on this "fast, trim launch."\footnote{270} The fate of the \textit{Janet}, like the \textit{F. I. Whitney}, also went unrecorded, but such confusion was the norm for these early vessels. Due to inconsistent, haphazard, or want of proper record keeping and conflicting personal accounts, confusion has surrounded nearly all of the boats in Lake McDonald during the first two decades of Glacier National Park's existence. The

*Emeline, Ethel, Cassie D.*, and *Lewtana* have contested reports or no reports of their use and subsequent disuse from 1915 to 1930. Part of the issue was the rapid transfer of concessions from 1916 to 1925.

Sometime between 1916 and 1920, Lewis sold his share of the concession to Frank Kelly who became the sole concessionaire in 1920.271 The following year, however, Kelly sold his concession to R. C. Abell, who continued the standard of running "on regular schedules connecting with the trains and provided dependable and satisfactory service."272 The launches Abell used for this "dependable and satisfactory" service were primarily the *Lewtana, Ethel*, and *Emeline* with the *Cassidy D* in dry dock in 1921. According to Bud Darling, whose father, Charles, was captain of the *Lewtana*, the *Lewtana* and *Ethel* (Figure 21) provided the majority of the passenger service at the time. The *Emeline* was relegated to ferrying freight, but occasionally still helped with the passenger load. Darling stated that whenever tourists who were camping around the lake and homesteaders on Lake McDonald "wanted the boats to come in they would us a big mirror to flag them in."273 Abell held the boat concession for only three years, after which he was bought out by the Glacier Park Transport Company who began their tenure at the start of the 1925 season.274


273 Bud Darling, Columbia Falls, to Francis H. Elmore, West Glacier, 17 July 1961, transcript in Boat Files, Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.

Figure 21. *Ethel* and *Lewtana* docked on Lake McDonald with passengers ([1920], Courtesy of Montana Historical Society Photograph Collections, Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT).

The Glacier Transport Company was a subsidiary company of the Great Northern Railway Company that was slowly taking over operations on the west side of the Park. According to a contemporary newspaper, the company bought “four power boats formerly operated by R. C. Abell,” and hired a local Flathead Lake boat captain, identified only as Captain A. Anderson, to run the fleet.\(^{275}\) The same article also reported that the Transport Company planned to launch a new $6,000 vessel equipped with diesel engines for the 1925 season.\(^{276}\) The fate of this boat and the use of the other four “power

\(^{275}\) *Great Falls Tribune*, “Park Company Buys Boats on Flathead Lake,” 8 May 1925.

\(^{276}\) Ibid.
boats," that were obviously the Lewtana, Ethel, Emeline, and Cassie D. were unclear. The Emeline and the Ethel, however, made lasting impacts and played important roles to at least two visitors to the lake between 1925 and 1930.

In the winter of 1926 and 1927, the Chadbourne family was staying in a cabin on Lake McDonald. Mrs. Chadbourne remembered that the Emeline and the Ethel made trips bringing necessary preparations and that “Chugging down the lake in the good old boat [Emeline] was great fun, and never a trip did any of us miss. It was like Christmas every time we landed at the dock at the foot of the lake and saw all those boxes, bags, and crates on the truck waiting to be put aboard.”

When their load was too big for the Emeline, they used the Ethel owned by the “Transportation Company…to bring tourists from Apgar to Lake McDonald Hotel [Lewis Hotel],” and “was big enough to handle the heavier, bulkier freight,” like her piano, “a big, old, black beauty of an up-right, weighing fully as much as a moose.”

The Ethel also played a vital role in a tragic fire in 1929, known as the “Half-Moon Fire.” Betty Lou Sibley Hines, who was thirteen in 1929, recounted the harrowing experience of the forest fire that started in Columbia Falls and burned its way to Apgar:

The men were very busy – watching roofs of the houses that they had decided it would be possible to save. They had pails for water and gunny sacks and what ladders they could find and they would climb up and wet down the places where the sparks landed. Shingle roofs burn pretty fast…Daddy and Aunt Bernice (I think it was) fixed us a bed on the floor of the Ethyl [sic] and bedded us [the children] all down. They explained

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277 Mrs. Horace Chadbourne to Harrington in “History of Apgar,” 52.
278 Ibid.
to us that if the fire got too close they would take the boat out and anchor it. We slept there all night but were restless.\textsuperscript{280}

Although the \textit{Ethel} survived this fire, she did not last much longer, reportedly intentionally burned in 1930 because of the improvement of a road that ran along the east side of Lake McDonald connecting Apgar to the Lewis Hotel. The \textit{Lewtana} was also purportedly burned sometime before the \textit{Ethel}, either in 1929 or 1930. There is no record concerning the destruction of the \textit{Cassie D}, but it was not running by 1930. The \textit{Emeline} was put into dry-dock by 1934, where it remained until 1950 when it was burned as it was a hazard for local children who played in it.\textsuperscript{281}

There was changing of the guard in Lake McDonald tourism vessels in 1930. The road that was later known as the Going-to-the-Sun Highway reached the Lewis Hotel in 1921 and continually drained business from the tourist launches.\textsuperscript{282} By 1930, the ageing fleet could not economically compete with automobiles. As a result, the launches were destroyed or neglected, and the Glacier Park Transportation Company replaced all of them with a single vessel, the \textit{De Smet}.

The \textit{De Smet} was one of the last boats built by William Swanson. He built the 56 foot (17 m) vessel in six weeks at Kalispell. Perhaps remembering the difficulty of transferring the \textit{City of Polson}, he moved the completed boat on a friend's logging

\textsuperscript{280} Betty Hines, "The Apgar Fire," in "History of Apgar," p. 58
\textsuperscript{282} Walter, "Roads In/Near Glacier National Park," 11.
Figure 22. Launch *De Smet* transported on logging truck to Lake McDonald (Thain White, 1930, Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

truck (Figure 22) to Lake McDonald.\textsuperscript{283} The *De Smet* has been in continual operation with improvements and repairs since 1930 and still operates on Lake McDonald today.

This was a seminal year for lake tourism around Lake McDonald not only because the fleet was changing, but also because John Lewis decided to sell his hotel to the Great Northern Railway. Lewis put his hotel up for sale in 1928, originally asking $325,000.\textsuperscript{284} The Great Northern entered into negotiations for the property in the winter of 1928-1929 through its agent, Howard Hayes. Hayes thought a fair market value was

\textsuperscript{284} Howard H. Hayes, Riverside, to W. P. Kenney, St. Paul, 1929, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
$200,000 and began pushing Lewis to accept this bid or face the alternative of
government purchase of the lands through "condemnation proceedings, which restrict the
sale value to a fair price," and of the government's penchant for slow, time-consuming
action. Hayes prodded Lewis, "If you really want to close out and rid yourself of the
annoyance and responsibility of an operation that cannot mean a great deal to you, at your
time of life." 285

By April 1929, Lewis lowered his price to $300,000 and the Great Northern countered with a new proposal of $275,000. Lewis seemed inclined to accept this proposition, but his wife interfered and insisted that they would not sell for less than $350,000, claiming that the property was actually in her name, not John's. 286 The fire of 1929, however, "threw somewhat of a scare into him [Lewis]," and he was "now rather anxious to get out." 287 Lewis and his wife ultimately sold the hotel to the Great Northern for $275,000 in January 1930. 288 By the summer of this year, the Lewis Hotel was reopened under its new name, the Lake McDonald Hotel, cementing the railroad's dominance over tourist concessions for the entire park, and pleasing the Park Service, too, since it meant that a single concessioner operated the major public utilities in Glacier. 289

285 Howard H. Hayes, Riverside, to John E. Lewis, Columbia Falls, 1929, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
286 Hans Walchli, Kalispell, to James T. Maher, St. Paul, 17 April 1929, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
287 Horace Albright to W. P. Kenney, 9 January 1930, transcript in Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT.
289 Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 47.
While the Great Northern’s influence in Belton was limited for the Park’s first twenty years, the company’s monopoly on concessions on the east-side allowed it to control directly and indirectly east-side lake tourism from the very beginning. The railroad was directly responsible for improvements in the infrastructure on the east-side by constructing hotels, chalets, and camps and improving existing roads and trails or constructing new ones. It also controlled the transportation of passengers to their accommodations whether via roads, trails, or lakes, but the railroad realized that the reality of transporting visitors was a logistical headache and was more than ready to permit other concessionaires to operate the various methods of conveyance. Of course, these businessmen had to meet with the company’s approval and work closely with the Great Northern. Boat concessions on the east-side of Glacier were a good example of the company’s direct and indirect position on tourist transportation.

In 1911, Glacier National Park issued its first boat concession, but not to the Great Northern. A local businessman, James T. Maher, received a permit to operate a 40 foot (12 m), twenty-passenger launch from August 21, 1911 to August 20, 1912 on St. Mary Lake, taking passengers from St. Mary camp to the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets.290 In June 1912, the Great Northern received permits to operate two, twenty-five passenger boats, the Red Eagle and the Glacier. Both of these were reportedly shipped in from the east on the Great Northern Railway.291

290 Walter, “Boats In/Near Glacier National Park,” 2. The name of Maher’s vessel and its subsequent history are unknown at this time.
Beginning with the 1913 season, the Great Northern took sole possession of the boat concessions on St. Mary Lake and made changes to its fleet. The current fleet however was insufficient to transport the increasing number of visitors to the Going-to-the-Sun Camp that according to the Park’s superintendent was “one of the most popular camps in the park.” As a result, the Great Northern replaced the Glacier with the St Mary, “an excellent boat…with a capacity of 125 people.” The St. Mary (Figure 23) was a prefabricated boat built in Seattle, Washington, and was shipped west to Glacier where it was reassembled. Although the St. Mary operated with other boats like the Red Eagle, this new vessel became the flagship of Glacier’s increasing fleet on the east-side lakes. She became the Park’s most photographed boat until it was sold and removed from St. Mary Lake around 1947.

While the Great Northern owned the permits to run boats on St. Mary Lake, the company administrators knew they needed a knowledgeable captain to ensure proper maintenance and operation of the vessels, preferably an individual who was familiar with the area and someone who could watch the boats over the harsh winters in the off-season.

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293 Ibid., 10. There is some disagreement about the carrying capacity of the St. Mary. Glacier historian, Donald H. Robinson, claimed in his seminal history about Glacier, Through the Years, that the vessel held only seventy-five passengers (Robinson, Through the Years, 75), but according to the superintendent’s report of 1913 and to one of the Great Northern’s 1914 marketing brochures, the St. Mary was able to hold at least 120 people (Great Northern, Hotel and Tours, 1914, 11). The Great Northern, however, was primarily responsible for this confusion because it also published at least two other brochures during 1914 that advertised a seventy-five passenger launch operating on St. Mary Lake. While these advertisements did not name the boat, St. Mary, explicitly, they undoubtedly were referring to it, thereby creating ambiguity in the documented record.
294 The St. Mary was 68 feet (20.7 m) long by 14 feet (4.3 m) in beam and weighed 58 tons. It used a 3 cylinder, 80 horse-power gasoline engine. (“Roster of Flathead Valley Lake," p.9).
295 "Roster of Flathead Valley Lake," p. 9
296 Red Eagle was removed from service in the early 1920s.
297 Ibid, 8-9.
Figure 23. (top) *St. Mary* docked at the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets; (bottom) *St. Mary* leaving the dock at the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets ([n.d.], Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society Photography Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN).
The company did not have to look hard or far, finding their man on Lake McDonald, William (Billy) Swanson. Captain Swanson — or more locally known as “Cap’n Bill”— was a prolific boat builder on Flathead Lake. He had constructed the Ethel for Kelly on Lake McDonald and was captaining the Lewtana, formerly named the City of Polson, when the Great Northern hired him to captain the St. Mary.

Born in 1883 in a small country town in Pennsylvania, Swanson built his first boat when he was thirteen using his father’s tools. He moved to Seattle, Washington in 1898 and then migrated to Montana in 1906 with his father who built barns in the Flathead Valley. Living in Somers, a lumber town that was a main port for ferrying timber and passengers across Flathead Lake, Swanson became owner and operator of the Flathead Boat Construction and Transportation Company. During his career, Swanson built no less than 20 recorded vessels, ranging in size from 350 feet (107 m) to small rowboats. This was about one-third of the recorded vessels built between 1907 through 1940 in the Flathead and McDonald Valleys.

After his harrowing trip bringing the City of Polson up the Flathead River to Lake McDonald and two years of captaining it, Swanson went to the east-side and ran the St. Mary for the next three years. During this time, he established positive business.

298 Clark, “Cap’n Swanson,” The Daily Inter Lake, 19 July 1970
299 The following is a list of some of Swanson’s boats (“Roster of Flathead Valley Lake Steamers”): Allyn, 25 foot (7.6) gasoline launch; Bonita, 25’ x 8’ (7.6 m x 2.4 m) gasoline launch; City of Polson; De Smet; Ethel, Flyer, 61’ x 12.5’ (19 x 3.8) gasoline launch; Howard James, logging tug used for Somers Lumber Company; International; Josephine; Kee-O-Mee, house-boat type, private gasoline launch; Little Chief; Mary S., 28 feet (8.5 m) long, gasoline launch; Reliance, steam logging tug, 48 feet (14 m) long; Rising Wolf; Wymufus; and he rebuilt other boats: Amberly, steam stern paddle wheel originally built around 1915; Montana, formerly the Wasco, rebuilt after fire in 1909, 58 feet (17 m) x 14 feet (4.3 m), steamship; the Willis, rebuilt at least three times between 1915 and 1943.
relations with the Glacier Park Hotel Company and in 1919 decided to apply for his own concession to run boats on Glacier’s other east-side lakes. On November 4, 1919, Swanson sent a letter to the superintendent of Glacier National Park, W. W. Payne, testifying to his good relationship with the Glacier Park Hotel Company’s manager, H. A. Noble, and indicating his desire to run boats on the east-side lakes:

In line with recent conversations with you and Mr. Noble I desire to make application for a concession to operate launches and row boats on lakes on the east side of the park during the coming and following seasons. It is my desire to maintain row boats for hire on Two Medicine Lake, St. Mary Lake, and McDermott Lake, as well as launches on Two Medicine Lake, during the coming season and a launch on Lake McDermott when facilities there permit. In addition to the foregoing I desire permission to maintain row boats and launches on the other lakes in the park as fast as the hotel company erect hotels or chalets.

Payne recommended Swanson’s petition to the director of the National Park Service in Washington D.C., stating, “in my [Payne’s] opinion the interest of the tourist will be best served by granting this application...” Twelve days later, Payne received a response from the Assistant Director of the National Park Service, Arno B. Cammerer, saying that the concession with the Glacier Park Hotel Company was not exclusive; therefore Payne was authorized to issue annual permits directly to Swanson. Payne wrote to Swanson confirming his concession, leaving the number of launches and rowboats to Swanson’s discretion. He also set the price for this concession at one dollar per passenger carrying capacity for each launch and a flat rate of twenty-five cents per passenger carrying capacity.
year for the rowboat concession. Payne allowed Swanson to calculate the total sum for the concessions since Payne was “unaware of the number of launches you [Swanson] will maintain or the passenger capacity of them.”

Swanson officially received the concession ( Permit No. 3 ) on February 21, 1920, for the sum of $65. This permit specified that Swanson had a one-year agreement from January 1, 1920 to 31 December 1920 to transport passengers on all the east-side lakes, to rent 36 row boats that were clinker-built from native cedar and fastened with “galo fastenings,” and to operate “one launch on Two Medicine Lake,” described as “gasoline, 38 feet long, 9 ft beam, 44” depth,” with the carrying capacity of “44 passengers.” The contract listed ten stipulations ranging from passenger safety to policy in transporting park officials and employees. Swanson was required to provide life preservers for each passenger and not to permit more passengers than the vessel’s carrying capacity.

Swanson built the Wymufus for his operations on Two Medicine Lake and provided a detailed inventory of material he used for construction of this type of vessel. According to the 1921 Superintendent’s Report, the Wymufus “provided popular pleasure and fishing cruise trips to park visitors.” Unfortunately, no record of how long the Wymufus ran on Two Medicine Lake or what became of it has yet been found, but

305 W. W. Payne to Swanson, 27 January 1920, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
306 Department of Interior, “Permit No. 3, Glacier National Park, Transportation Form, 21 February 1920,” approved by Stephen Mather, Director of the National Park Service, DS (photocopy), Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
307 Ibid.
308 While the concession permit stated that the vessel was 38 feet (12 m), another source stated it as 36 feet (11 m) (“Roster of Flathead Valley Lake Steamers,” p. 11).
Swanson’s success in providing tourists with reliable and comfortable transportation was confirmed by the Park Service’s willingness to re-issue permits to him.

From 1920 to 1924, Swanson applied for boat concessions on the east-side lakes and had little difficulty in receiving them. The permits generally followed the formula of Swanson’s original concession of 1920, but there were sometimes small differences. For example, the Park Service raised the price for Swanson’s 1921 permit to $76.00 because the Park Service charged one dollar for each of Swanson’s rowboats. Also beginning in 1921, the Park Service issued separate permits for the launch and the rowboats in order to address safety concerns for each type of boat.\[310\] In particular, requirements for proper accoutrements on each of Swanson’s thirty-six rowboats were very explicit in the new permits, “Thirty-six row boats, 14 to 16 feet (4.3 m to 4.9 m) long, each boat fully equipped with oars, row locks, baling bucket, painter, and one cork life cushion, life preserver or life buoy.”\[311\] Although Swanson did not have trouble securing these concessions, there were moments when he had differences with the Glacier Park Hotel Company, and these differences proved who was truly in charge of lake tourism in Glacier National Park.

At the beginning of the 1921 season, Swanson asked Glacier officials for a permit to build a boat house on Lake McDermott to house his row boats and to build a “small

\[310\] George E. Goodwin, Washington D. C., to Henry W. Hutchings, Belton, 23 November 1920, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

\[311\] Department of Interior, “National Park Service, Glacier National Park, Transportation Permit, J. W. Swanson of Kalispell, Montana,” 27 April 1922, DS (photocopy), Minnesota Historical Society in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
bungalow”312 near the hotel to accommodate the care-taker of the boats and his family.313 The acting director of the National Park Service at the time, Arno B. Cammerer, sent this request to Noble whose response, although delayed because he was moving his office from St. Paul to Glacier, was firmly against the construction of such a bungalow, “I [Noble] do not care for the idea of boat house which will house and sleep people being located anywhere in front of the hotel.”314 Noble rationalized his reasons by saying that it would require great difficulty in leasing the land to Swanson and that “from a business point of view I do not think it would be advisable.”315 Business reasons for prohibiting Swanson’s boat house and care-taker accommodations, however, was likely the least of company’s real concerns.

In the same letter, Noble referred to what was the greater issue of putting such buildings near the Great Northern’s Many Glacier Hotel:

I do not think it would be...desirable from the stand point of general appearance...There is no more beautiful frontage on any lake than that directly in front of Many-Glacier hotel. It is the only frontage at any place that we have that is not being used for saddle horse and automobile traffic...We should aim to keep in the preservation of this strip and not encumber it with unnecessary buildings.316

The Great Northern worked hard to construct the landscape around Lake McDermott to meet tourists’ expectations and wanted to control this experience. Such control was

312 Swanson stated the following specifications for the bungalow: “16 ft x 24 ft, 8 ft high, and built of logs and floored and roofed with lumber and made similar to the Hotel Company’s chalets…”
313 William Swanson, Glacier Park, to Superintendent Glacier National Park, Belton, 12 May 1921, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
314 H.A. Noble, St. Paul, to Arno B. Cammerer, Washington D.C., 13 June 1921, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
315 Ibid.
316 Ibid.
achieved by creating the illusion for the tourists that they had escaped the industrial world
with all its troubles and toils and arrived at a pristine wilderness, unspoiled, and filled
with healthy recreation and relaxation. Swanson’s boat house would destroy this illusion
and a caretaker’s bungalow directly in front of the lake would inevitably remind patrons
that people were working at Glacier. The Great Northern’s construction of the lake’s
landscape as an idealic scene of nature would be ruined, and the company feared the
financial losses from the destruction of such an illusion.

The Park Service agreed, sending a quick reply that assured Noble that all the
structures in the Park were erected “so that they will add to rather than detract from each
other’s appearance,” and that the Service prohibited any “eyesore” like the boat house to
obstruct tourists’ views.\textsuperscript{317} The Park Service’s position was not surprising since it, too,
had a large investment in making sure the tourists were pleased with the product they
purchased – in this case, an appropriately beautiful, unspoiled view of the lake and the
mountains. Even if the Park Service agreed with Swanson’s plan, the Park’s officials
never would have implemented it, since the Great Northern had the financial power and
leverage. A letter from Glacier’s superintendent, J. R. Eakin, to the Director of the
National Park Service indicated: “It is evident that, owing to the large amount of capital
invested by the Glacier Park Hotel Company, their wishes in this matter should be

\textsuperscript{317} Arno B. Cammerer, Washington, D. C., to H. A. Noble, St. Paul, 21 June 1921, transcript in Minnesota
Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St.
Paul, MN.
Eakin was confident that Swanson and Noble would work out a compromise.

Although the compromise went unrecorded, it probably involved building a small, temporary office building near the dock that was sufficient to house oars, cushions, and other boating paraphernalia and used by the care-taker as shelter during the day, but was not a permanent building so it might be moved at any time. In addition, two floating docks were constructed and attached to the dock on which the rowboats were placed and chained secure when not in use. Winter storage for the boats was found elsewhere. By the 1925 summer season, however, a concrete solution was not found, leaving Swanson to make further requests more in line with Great Northern aesthetics. In a letter to the Park administration, Swanson asked for permission to build his desired boat houses “in a suitable place that would not smear the beauty of … [the] lake.”

If Swanson became frustrated by the Great Northern’s reluctance to let him build his desired boat houses, he was able to put such feelings aside and maintain positive relations with the company.

As evidence of the men’s good business relationship, Noble wrote the following letter in 1924 to Glacier’s superintendent praising Swanson and recommending that he be given an extended ten-year permit instead of the customary one-year concession:

Capt. Swanson has given good boat service to people in Glacier Park. He has considerable investment in boats at the present time and I do not know where you could find anyone who would give better service in the Park than he does.

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319 Swanson to H. W. Hutchings, Belton, Montana, 1 March 1920, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
Considering that he has his entire capital tied up in boats, I would think he was entitled to the protection of a ten-year concession, which seems entirely reasonable.

He cooperates splendidly with the Hotel Company and its guests and we would be very glad indeed to see secure such a concession.\(^{320}\)

Swanson was granted the ten-year permit for $160.00 annually and asked to submit a formal application covering all possible boating operations he wanted to undertake over the ten years.\(^{321}\)

The captain responded that he was planning to put two 36 foot (11 m) launches in both Lake McDermott and Lake Josephine, respectively. These boats were the *Allyn* (Figure 24) and the *Josephine*,\(^{322}\) and according to Swanson, each was capable of carrying forty passengers, who would be protected by auto-retractable “tops,” and that each could make a round trip journey in fifteen minutes if necessary.\(^{323}\) When asked to provide blueprints of these vessels, Swanson was nonplussed and apologetic saying that

\(^{320}\) H. A. Noble, St. Paul, to C.J. Kraebel, Belton, 9 October 1924, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.


\(^{322}\) There is some historical disagreement about the size of these vessels and where they operated. According to one source (Flathead Valley Steamers, p. 1 and 6) both the *Allyn* and the *Josephine* were only 25 feet (7.6 m) long and operated only on Lake McDermott. However, numerous letters from Swanson and Park officials, as well as the official concession granted to Swanson, state that these vessels were 36 feet (11 m) long and were to be operated on both lakes. Although the boats' locations were not explicitly mentioned, presumably the *Josephine* ran on Lake Josephine while the *Allyn* was on the Lake McDermott. This is merely circumstantial evidence and definitely not conclusive since transporting one of the boats overland from Lake McDermott to Lake Josephine would have been a costly and troublesome procedure.

\(^{323}\) William Swanson to H. W. Hutchings, Belton, Montana, 1 March 1925, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
he had never been asked for plans from any of his other ships and so the plans he sent were not "very good." He assured park officials, however, that these new boats were "so much better than anything ever I put on that [the lakes]," and that "they [the boats] will be noiseless. There will be no motor noise."  

This reference to noiseless motors stemmed from the Glacier Park Hotel Company's concern that boat motors on Lake McDonald would become objectionable to guests, especially if they were operated in the evening. The Hotel Company was highly aware of the illusionary landscape it had constructed and did not want the rude

324 H. W. Hutchings, Belton, to William Swanson, 7 March 1925, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN; William Swanson to H. W. Hutchings, Belton, 18 March 1925, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

325 H. A. Noble, St. Paul, to Chas. J. Kraebel, Belton, 6 June 1924, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
noise of motors to remind people that work was actually being done on the lake. Again Swanson deferred to the company’s interest, realizing where his customers were coming from and went out of his way to reassure Noble and Glacier officials that he was aware of the problem of noise pollution and had addressed it with his new boats.

In 1926, Swanson requested an addendum to his permit to build and to put another boat on Two Medicine Lake. On April 9, 1926, he received a nine-year concession to operate Rising Wolf, a 44-1/2 foot (13 m) by 12 foot (3.7 m) gasoline launch with a fifty-person carrying capacity (Figure 25). Rising Wolf completed Swanson’s fleet on the east-side lakes of Glacier National Park, with Rising Wolf and Wymufus operating on Two Medicine Lake and Josephine and Altyn on Lake McDermott and Josephine Lake. His boats had a steady business of tourists, carrying over ten thousand passengers during 1926. Although Rising Wolf was the last boat Swanson built for his own concessionaire operations in east-side Glacier, it was not the last vessel he constructed for the Park.

In 1926, he built another 44 foot (13 m), fifty-passenger launch, Little Chief (Figure 26), for the Glacier Park Hotel Company that operated it on St. Mary Lake along side of the St. Mary. The Little Chief was an auxiliary boat designed to handle the overflow from the St. Mary, but it was busy during the peak part of the season. Near the end of July, the Little Chief carried almost thirteen hundred passengers in two months, or

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327 United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company, Baltimore, Insurance Endorsement to William Swanson, Kalispell, 15 June 1927, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
Figure 25. *Rising Wolf* on Two Medicine ([n.d.], Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).

Figure 26. *Little Chief* docked next to the larger, *St. Mary*. ([n.d.], Courtesy of Glacier National Park Historical Collections, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT).
on average twenty-one passengers per day. Meanwhile, the St. Mary carried approximately 18,700 passengers from June to September 1926, representing an average of 156 passengers per day.

As the 1926 tourist season came to a close, Noble asked Swanson to design and begin preparations for the largest boat to run on any of Glacier’s lakes, the International. Noble had grand plans for the International, which was to operate on Waterton Lake. He recommended that it carry about two hundred passengers with the following accoutrements:

Two decks, both of them observation decks, the lower deck to be equipped with slide windows, something like the street-cars in St. Paul. The upper deck could be as open as possible and strong enough to carry all of the passengers. This deck could be so arranged that on moon-light nights the orchestra could be put on the boat and people could dance if they cared to. What I have in mind is something the type of boat that is the old river boat or boats on inland lakes, except on a smaller scale and adapted to gasoline engine power.  

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329 As Glacier National Park’s Canadian counterpart, Waterton Lakes National Park, established in June 1911, shares the international boundary creating a geographic and geologic continuum between the two countries. Like Glacier, Waterton is defined by dramatic U-shaped valleys, sharp peaks, and glacial lakes that form a chain. One lake, Upper Waterton Lake, crosses the international boundary into the United States. Recognizing the similar and unique natural features both parks shared, Congress and Canadian parliament enacted legislation to create the “Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park,” in 1932. (Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 168-172).

330 Noble to Kenney, 28 September 1926.
Noble also thought that the *International* would allow tourists to enjoy a "lake trip [on Waterton Lake]...the outstanding one thing that everybody at Waterton Lake can do."

Noble recognized that riding on a boat and enjoying the scenery with little effort and in comfort was appealing to tourists seeking an outdoor experience without hardship, as he noted in a letter that revealed the importance of boat operations to lake tourism:

"One of the peculiarities of Glacier Park as a whole is that there is no one thing that everybody can do. Not everyone can ride horses; not everyone can hike over the trails; only a certain percentage of the people are interested in fishing. The automobile ride from here [Midvale] to Many Glacier is more of a transportation service than it is a sight-seeing trip. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that a boat of suitable size and construction could be made the one thing at Waterton Lake Hotel that every guest could avail themselves of. They would take the boat trip not only once, but maybe several times, thereby making it a maximum revenue producer."

Noble presented Swanson with his ideas for the vessel, and Swanson drew up plans for a 73 foot long by 17 foot (22 m x 5 m) beam launch made from local cedar, oak, Douglas fir and walnut and with a carrying capacity of 250 passengers. While Noble negotiated with administrators and officials from the Great Northern Railway Company and the Canadian Parks, Swanson began construction of the *International* in the spring of 1927, using an *ad hoc* boathouse located at Goathaunt and set back amongst the trees to be as inconspicuous as possible. Poor weather and difficulty in transporting construction materials led to delays, but by the spring of 1928, the *International* was taking tourists on

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331 H. A. Noble, St. Paul, to W. P. Kenney, St. Paul, 9 October 1926, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
332 Ibid.
a two-hour, fourteen-mile trip around the international waters of Waterton Lake; and
Captain Swanson was onto his final project for Glacier National Park. 333

Two years after constructing the International, Swanson built his last boat in
Glacier National Park, the De Smet, a 56 foot (17 m), 100-passenger launch which
replaced Lake McDonald’s ageing fleet of the Emeline, Lewtana, Ethel, and Cassie D.
The substitution of one vessel to do the work of four boats portended a change in
Glacier’s tourism industry. As the 1920s became the 1930s, the prominent role launches
played in lake tourism declined, but this was not because of poor craftsmanship or poor
service. 334 Instead, the inexorable march of automobiles and the rise of autocamping
sealed the fate of Glacier National Park’s Golden Age of tourism launches. 335

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333 H. A. Noble, St. Paul, to W. P. Kenney, 16 November 1926; William Swanson, Kalispell, to H. A.
Noble, St. Paul, 20 December 1926; Noble, St. Paul, to J. B. Harkin, Ottowa, 14 January 1927; Noble, St.
Paul, to C. J. Kraebel, Belton, 14 January 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to George Hess, Jr., 21 January 1927;
Swanson, Kalispell, to Noble, St. Paul, 10 February 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to Swanson, Kalispell, 10 March
1927; Swanson, Kalispell, to Noble, St. Paul, 17 March 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to Swanson, 21 March
1927; Noble, St. Paul, to Swanson, Kalispell, 28 March 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to E. S. Busby, Ottawa, 12
April 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to Kenney, 6 May 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to C. O. Jenkins, Glacier Park, 12
July 1927; Swanson, Kalispell, to Noble, St. Paul, 14 August 1927; Noble, St. Paul, to Kenney, 25 August
1927; Swanson, Kalispell, to Noble, St. Paul, 25 October 1927; Chas L. Sheridan, Great Falls, to Swanson,
Kalispell, 29 October 1927; J. J. O’Mahony, Great Falls, to Noble, St. Paul, 28 January 1928; Noble, St.
Paul, to Swanson, Kalispell, 31 January 1928; Noble, St. Paul, to Swanson, Kalispell, 28 April 1928;
Noble, St. Paul, to H. G. Robinson; Vancouver, 12 May 1928; William Fisher, to Collector of Customs,
Great Falls, 14 June 1928. All above transcripts in Great Northern Railway Records, International file,
Minnesota Historical Society Special Collections, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
334 In fact, as a testament to his skill as a shipwright, Swanson’s De Smet, Rising Wolf, and Little Chief still
currently operate in Glacier.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The early 1930s brought hard times to America and to Captain William Swanson. Swanson recalled, "Times were pretty tough during the depression...there weren't many people who could afford a boat ride."\textsuperscript{336} Although the Great Depression undoubtedly affected the number of people willing to pay for a boat ride, from 1930 to 1935 the number of visitors to Glacier National Park decreased for only two years, and then rebounded to unprecedented numbers. In 1930, 73,783 tourists traveled to Glacier, a 4.3% increase from the previous year,\textsuperscript{337} but 1931 saw 18.9% decrease with 59,846 visitors. The low-water mark followed in 1932 with only 53,202 people entering Glacier, but by 1933, 76,615 visitors returned to the Park, indicating that the Depression had limited impact. The number of tourists increased to record levels of 116,965 people, 143,240 people, and 210,072 people in 1934, 1935, and 1936, respectively.\textsuperscript{338} Swanson, however, did not share in this prosperity.

When Swanson's ten-year boat concession expired in 1934, he reapplied for another ten-year permit. In his re-application letter, he indicated that he had fallen behind in his annual payments.\textsuperscript{339} This lack of payment was confirmed by the chief auditor of National Park Service, who reported that when he visited Swanson in 1934, the captain was just paying the "franchise fees for 1932-1933, and...that the franchise fee for 1934

\textsuperscript{336} Clark, "Cap'n Swanson," \textit{The Daily Inter Lake}, 19 July 1970.
\textsuperscript{337} 70,742 people visited Glacier National Park in 1929.
\textsuperscript{338} Robinson, \textit{Through the Years}, 127.
\textsuperscript{339} William Swanson, Kalispell, to E.T. Sc oyen, Washington, D.C., 24 October 1934, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
would be turned in to the Superintendent within the next week or so." The auditor recommended, however, the approval of Swanson’s permit, stating, “Captain Swanson now has over $32,000...invested in his properties in the park, and for the past several years, has been taking quite a bit less [emphasis added]. I think that he should be given a ten-year contract.”

Swanson was granted a new ten-year concession, but he clearly was having financial difficulties. Due to these problems and an ailing wife, he was forced to put his concession and all of his vessels up for sale in 1938. He sold his operations to Art Burch and Carl Anderson, both from Kalispell, in May of that year. After settling an outstanding debt of $449.23 with the Glacier Park Hotel Company, he moved to California where he was put in charge of a shipyard in Los Angeles during World War II.

For the next seventy years, the boat concessions in Glacier National Park were consolidated under Art Burch and his son, Art, Jr., as the Glacier Park Boat Company. In 1945, Anderson’s widow sold his share of the concession to Art, Sr., leaving him as the

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340 [Chief Auditor], Longmire, to E.T. Scoyen, Washington D.C., 10 September 1934, transcript in Minnesota Historical Society Special Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.
341 Ibid.
sole owner of all of Swanson’s vessels. The younger Burch purchased the *De Smet* from the Glacier Park Transport Company in 1953, giving the Glacier Park Boat Company possession of every launch except the *International*. In 1967, Art, Sr., sold his share to his son, who ran the company for the next thirty years, and who bought the *International* in 1977, ran it for ten years, and then resold it in 1987. From 1938 to 1987, the Burchs added and removed modern vessels from their fleet, but the center pieces of the Glacier Park Boat Company remained the four vessels built by Swanson: *Little Chief, Rising Wolf* (later renamed *Sinopah*), *International*, and *De Smet*. These wooden launches have been repaired and refitted through the years, but they remain working testaments to the Golden Age of tourism launches in Glacier National Park.343

The Great Depression helped end the heavy use of tourism launches, but it was not the primary factor. A new method of conveyance was sweeping across the country and was the next evolutionary step in the democratization of touring: automobiles. The inexorable march of automobiles’ presence in national parks began in 1908 when Mount Rainer was the first park to admit cars, and increased after 1910 due to the efficiency of Henry Ford’s assembly line that made more vehicles more affordable to people. Like the transcontinental railroad before it, the automobile symbolized ideals Americans cherished. It represented a piece of technology produced by American ingenuity and industry offering mobility and freedom. Americans eagerly consumed this new technology. Soon they were forming auto clubs, taking auto tours across the country to different parks, creating auto camps, and forcing the national park administrators to

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design routes and roads through their parks pleasing to the growing number of
"windshield tourists." By 1915, all parks allowed automobiles.  

Many people viewed the automobile as an intrusive element in a pristine
wilderness, but some of the loudest objectors were not as concerned for the serenity of
nature as for their own agendas. Louis Hill for example complained in 1911 that autos
turned national parks into day-trips that would not allow people to experience truly the
scenic majesty of the Park. This sentiment was disingenuous, however, since Hill, a
known motorist buff, brought his own automobile on a Great Northern flatcar whenever
he traveled and also sponsored a 1913 auto tour from Minnesota to Glacier.  

The discrepancy between Hill’s words and actions was not as disparate when
examined within the context of Hill’s social and culture framework. Hill originally saw
the automobile as another toy for the genteel and elite; another technological advance that
made it possible for people like him to escape the rigors and stresses of the industrial
world. As more middle-class Americans were able to afford this form of escapism,
however, Hill realized that automobiles were becoming a threat to Great Northern
Railway Company’s profits as passengers who once rode his trains were driving
themselves. During the 1930s, his worries became a reality.  

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345 Ibid., 254; T.L. Ready, “Race to Glacier,” in After the Buffalo Were Gone: Louis W. Hill Sr., and the Blackfeet at Glacier National Park, ed. The Science Museum of Minnesota (St. Paul, MN: Science Museum of Minnesota, 2002), 23-24. For this trip, Hill even provided a “hotel train” that followed the caravan of motorists with six sleeper rail cars, two diners, an observation car, vehicle repair and maintenance car, and finally, a car for the press equipped with linotype machine, photoengraving plant, and mailing facilities.
In 1929, the Great Northern Railway Company officially brought 10,182 of 70,742 (14%) visitors to Glacier National Park. For the next three years, the proportion of Glacier National Park visitors arriving by rail averaged a three-percent decrease per year. After 1932, the low-water mark for the number of Great Northern passengers (2,988) and Glacier National Park visitors (53,202), people returned to the Park in record numbers: 76,615 in 1933; 116,965 in 1934; 143,240 in 1935; and 210,072 in 1935.\textsuperscript{347} The number of rail arrivals also increased during this period, but never surpassed 10,000 again and only represented 5%, 6%, and 4% of the visiting population for 1933, 1934, and 1935, respectively. The decline of passenger travel by rail coincided with the completion of major road construction projects in Glacier including the Going-to-the-Sun Highway.\textsuperscript{348} This allowed more auto-tourists to bring their vehicles to and through the park.\textsuperscript{349} The automobile presented another, non-economic threat to Great Northern’s hegemony over the Park. It threatened the social landscape.

Hill deliberately constructed the landscape of Glacier National Park through his social and cultural biases. He designed his hotels, hired and trained his employees, and offered recreational activities to reflect his belief that Glacier was a rustic refuge where others could find spiritual regeneration from soul-corrupting influences of the industrial world. Although Hill claimed that Glacier National Park was a scenic sanctuary for all

\textsuperscript{347} This was the greatest amount of people to enter Glacier National Park until 1947.
\textsuperscript{348} The Going-to-the-Sun Highway links the east and west sides of Glacier, climbing almost 2500 feet (762 m) to the 6664-foot (2,031 m) summit at Logan’s Pass over its 51 miles (82 km) that stretch from St. Mary to West Glacier. Surveys for the highway began in 1916 and construction started in 1921. It was finished in 1933, but final surfacing and other improvements (e.g. guardrails, roadside cleaning) continued until 1935, the same time period as when record numbers of visitors returned to Glacier (Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 126-127).
\textsuperscript{349} Robinson, Through the Years, 90-93, 127; Hanna, Many-Splendored Glacierland, 126-127.
Americans, his vision of the Park resonated most with those like him: the American elite. Automobiles had the potential to unravel Hill’s careful plans.

Autos were seen as a tool for the democratization of travel, presumably allowing a greater diversity of Americans the opportunity to visit and stay in national parks. Many auto-tourists celebrated this idea that the automobile community was a melting pot reflecting a diverse cross section of American society. They found renewed faith in American principles as class conflicts and social differences disappeared into geographical interest or cultural curiosities as they traveled along the road. Narratives of these “diverse” groups of tourists expressed feelings of brotherhood, community, and family with their fellow Americans, and extolled the democratizing effect of the road. The reality, however, revealed a different view about the diversity of the tourists using automobiles.350

Although Ford’s assembly-line production made cars more affordable and dramatically expanded car ownership, it was primarily middle-class professionals and white-collar workers who had the disposable income and time to travel across the country in an automobile. The democratization of auto-travel ignored minorities crowded in American cities who lacked the financial means or job flexibility to tour America’s national parks. In fact, minorities were often indirectly associated with the stress and conflict of an urban-industrial world that auto-tourists were escaping, and were therefore marginalized even more as tourists’ narratives romanticized the American landscape as a rural, open space, free from pollution, noise, and over-worked humans—the antithesis of

350 Schaffer, See America First, 233.
urban centers. The reality of the diversity among auto-tourists therefore was a homogenous community of native-born, white, upper- and middle-class Americans, exactly the demographic for whom Hill constructed and marketed Glacier National Park.351

With the social infrastructure unchallenged, Hill and his company adapted to meet the economic challenge posed by motorists by incorporating automobiles into the Park’s landscapes. The Great Northern’s subsidiary, the Glacier Park Transport Company, offered more auto-tours on its roads and highways and catered to car owners. The company adapted successfully because the automobile was simply another technological tool used by tourists to transcend their ordinary lives and literally to acquire an “extraordinary” experience. Like the transcontinental trains and tour launches before them, cars allowed people with disposable time and money to “discover” what it meant to be American. Although their specific reasons for traveling were as varied and subjective as the individuals, American auto-tourists in the 1930s shared similar sentiments of nationalism and personal discovery as their train-riding predecessors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As the United States struggled to find a national identity after the Civil War, many Americans believed that the country’s future rested in transcontinental railroads and the West. Transcontinental railroads were manifestations of American ingenuity and industry; physical testaments to Americans’ ability to overcome and to conquer nature. The West was seen as the geographic embodiment of hope and opportunity; a landscape

351 Ibid., 233-234.
untouched and unspoiled by the corruption associated with industrialism. The paradox of using industry to escape industry did not seem to trouble tourism promoters who promoted these characteristics as harmonious components with the rail trip enhancing the scenery and vice versa. Promoters marketed the railroads as a means to visit Western landscapes, to meet new and interesting cultures, and to share in the emergence of a new national identity in such comfort and civility that the journey would be as pleasurable as the destination.

American consumers increasingly bought the tourism agents' product logic and described the journey to the West as an American pilgrimage, a journey through which they often found personal strength, spiritual awakening, and a feeling that America's true heritage was not cultural, or found in ancient monuments like in Europe, but it was natural, present in the wondrous scenery they were experiencing. This natural heritage was uniquely American, and a trip to the West was a uniquely American journey. Travelers were eager to share their emotions and experiences in diaries, newspapers, and published journals. As more people read first-hand accounts of the West, they too wanted to participate in the new American heritage of the West, especially as they learned that the West's seemingly unlimited natural resources were actually endangered by increasing settlement and exploitation.

Conservationists like George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Law Olmstead, and John Muir brought additional attention to the Western landscape, exposing the dangers threatening natural resources through passionate and eloquent expositions that delineated reasons why the American West needed preservation. In the late nineteenth century,
public increasingly pressured the federal government to become more active in
designating national preserves for future generations to use and enjoy. At the turn of the
century, President Theodore Roosevelt’s administration under the direction of Gifford
Pinchot made conservation a national priority. By the end of his presidency, Roosevelt,
with Pinchot’s guidance, had set aside more timberland and created more national parks
than all previous presidential administrations combined. When Roosevelt vacated the
presidency in 1909, there were nine national parks in the United States, and the
contentious movement for the tenth national park in a remote northwest corner of
Montana was well underway.

The struggle to create Glacier National Park began soon after the completion of
the Great Northern Railway Company’s transcontinental railroad from St. Paul,
Minnesota to Seattle, Washington, in 1895. Running along the United States’s northern
border, the Great Northern was formed by James J. Hill, the company’s first president, to
compete with the transcontinental rail lines already established to the south. Hill spent a
great amount of time, money, and labor to find a suitable route through the Rocky
Mountains. Eventually the route through Marias Pass in northwest Montana was found
through the efforts of John Stephens in 1889. He then set records for the construction of
rail line, beginning in 1890 and reaching Seattle in 1895. As the Great Northern built its
transcontinental railroad, the company created small depot towns with some surviving
while and others disappeared once construction crews proceeded elsewhere. One of the
former towns was Belton, Montana, established in 1893 when the Great Northern crossed
Marias Pass into the Lake McDonald Valley.
As rail-wearied travelers stepped off the train in Belton, they saw a vista of sharp-peaked mountains and virgin pine forests. Intrepid entrepreneurs recognized the natural beauty of the area was attracting attention from train passengers and set up simple accommodations and services for the first tourists. Tourism businesses started to appear in Belton and then three miles (4.8 km) north at Lake McDonald. George Snyder was one such businessman, owning a small hotel on the other side of the lake from the primary wagon trail. To transport his guests to his hotel, Snyder purchased and ran the first steam launch, the *F.I. Whitney*, in 1895 introducing the first period of lake tourism in the Glacier region. Within ten years, people from across the country were choosing to spend their summers on Lake McDonald as national publicity increasingly highlighted the beauty of the lake and its surrounding scenery.

George Bird Grinnell, editor of the national publication, *Forest and Stream*, and a leader in the conservation movement, was at the vanguard of promoting Glacier as a unique region worthy of national park consideration. His efforts met more resistance than acceptance during the early years of the 1900s. Local Montanans, state and federal officials, and Great Northern business rivals resisted the creation of another park for different reasons. Montana locals and some bureaucrats felt federal presence in northwest Montana was intrusive and unnecessary, while Great Northern competitors feared the consequences of a partnership between the federal government and the railroad company. Grinnell, however, used the Great Northern as an ally, collaborating with the company's travel agent, F. I. Whitney, to publicize Glacier's natural wonders, and he continued to lobby Congressmen like Montana Senator Thomas Carter. Carter's
legislation to create Glacier National Park however was continually obstructed by opponents in Congress. In 1907, a new figure entered the situation and lent his considerable support for Glacier National Park.

Louis W. Hill succeeded his father as president of the Great Northern Railway Company in 1907. While James Hill never fully embraced the idea of using rail cars to carry passengers instead of freight, he understood the profitable relationship between railroad and tourism industries. Once the younger Hill became president, he directed much of the Great Northern's resources in promoting passenger travel, even appropriating the slogan, "See America First," as the company's private motto. He foresaw the advantages of a national park on the rail line and quietly worked behind the scenes to move stalled legislation through Congress in 1909. His political and financial influence help to remove any further obstacles, and in 1910, President William Taft signed legislation making Glacier National Park the United States's tenth national park.

Hill immediately set forth building the new Park's literal and figurative image in America's consciousness. He used the Great Northern's considerable resources to develop the Park's infrastructure by building hotels, chalets, roads, and transportation services suitable for Eastern tourists' comfort and sensibilities. Since the customers he wanted to court were familiar with European architecture and culture, he modeled his building after Swiss chalets and had his employees dress in Alpine costumes. He then embarked on an aggressive marketing campaign promoting Glacier as "America's Little Switzerland." In brochures, pamphlets, and photographs, he constructed the image of Glacier as the perfect sanctuary for Americans to relax and enjoy the pristine and wild
West with every amenity available in civilized society. Hill used iconography such as tour launches to convey this message subconsciously.

A photograph showing a towering mountain casting an imposing shadow on a small white boat filled with well-dressed people, crossing a crystal-clear lake, conveyed the message of wilderness conquered and enjoyed by American ingenuity. Like its transcontinental railroads, the Great Northern constructed launches as symbols of industry working in harmony with nature. They were icons of civility in a un-civilized world. The Great Northern wanted their customers to feel safe and to experience adventure simultaneously. Glacier’s lakes were perfectly suited to accomplish both. Recreation, relaxation, and excitement were present along the shorelines or on a boat ride. The company made sure that its concessionaires running boat operations in the Park understood this image.

Although the federal government was in charge of the Park officially, boat operators like William Swanson required Great Northern’s approval to build and to run vessels on the Park’s east-side lakes. Although Swanson was Glacier’s most successful and prolific boat builder and captain from 1915 to 1935, he required recommendations from Great Northern agents to procure his concessions. The rail company usually granted him their permission since the partnership was mostly fruitful. During Swanson’s tenure, he built and ran the greatest number of launches on the lakes, some of which are still running today. He presided over the golden era of early lake tourism in Glacier National Park that yielded only to the inexorable march of automobiles in the 1930s.
From 1895 to 1930, tourist launches played an integral role in the development of Glacier National Park. They were essential for the transportation of passengers and freight, but they were more than utilitarian vehicles. They were part of Glacier’s landscape and iconography, symbolizing American civilization and control over a wild, pristine, and unspoiled environment. Like railroads before them and automobiles after them, tourist launches were vehicles tourists used to reach this “other” world; a world free from urban industrial pollution. They were marketed and packaged by Louis Hill and the Great Northern as vital components for a product that met consumers’ demand for majestic scenery, European comfort, and American nationalism: Glacier National Park.
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