

Little Bar in the Woods

By Pete Clark

While working seismograph in Northern Montana, we spent a lot of time in the mountains east of Glacier National Park. We worked across mountain meadows and through dense forests.

Offsetting the drudgery of working in mountainous terrain, small, delicious wild strawberries were abundant in the meadows. We worked at a fast pace, but there was down time while three explosive charges were coordinated for individual detonation. Due to the nature of the substrata we were mapping, one explosive charge was placed in a drillhole on the line, near the Recording Truck and other charges were located five miles out, on each side of the line we were following. We used the slack time to harvest the small berries.

Living in East Glacier Park, a small western town whose major industry is tourism and the Glacier Park Lodge, was different and interesting. My first introduction to the Glacier Park Lodge was when I worked a Saturday, rodding and chaining for a surveyor, to gain extra hours. A benchmark, giving latitude, longitude and elevation above sea level, was set in the veranda at the front of the Lodge. I stood about four feet in before the main entrance, holding a rod, while the surveyor set up to measure the distance and change in elevation between the transit and the benchmark. A lady asked me what we were doing. I told her we were surveying for a railroad spur that would go through the middle of the Lodge. She seemed to believe me. Later, I spent time in the Lodge's lounge, listening to the Grand Piano and hearing tales of the Bush, told by a Canadian surveyor from Australia.

I got along well with the Blackfeet my age even though I had gotten off to a rocky start when I arrived in town. I parked the truck I had driven there and looked for other members of the crew. If you are searching for doodlebuggers, you look in the bars. They were not in the first bar, so I went into the one next door. It was filled with doodlebuggers and Blackfeet Indians. One of the guys yelled, "Hey Pete, come sit with the white men." Every Indian in the place turned and looked in our direction. I did not want to be part of an action-packed reenactment of Custer's Last Stand, so I beat feet for the door.

My favorite place was a little bar in a forest clearing about a quarter of a mile out of East Glacier Park. The place was rustic and the Great Falls Select beer was good. Sometimes I would walk out there alone and sometimes with a friend. The Wurlitzer had great selections of Country Western and 50's Rock and Roll. I especially liked listening to Jim Reeves singing *Four Walls* and *He'll Have to Go*. Whenever I need to get away, I go back to that little bar in the woods, sip beer from a bottle of Great Falls Select and listen to that velvet voice vocalize those honkytonk ballads.

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