



Earl's Diary - Thursday, June 6, 2013

Dear Loyal Readers;

This morning we slept in and left on our tour of Grand Teton National Park at 11:00. We had previewed the scenery Tuesday and Wednesday as we passed through the area to and from Yellowstone. We were amazed then. Today we stopped at the Visitor Center and several overlooks to learn more about the park.

Here's what we found about the park: The park was created in 1929 but only protected the Teton range and the glacial lakes at its base. In 1950, the park grew to its current size when John D. Rockefeller donated land protecting the valley floor was added. Grand Teton spans just over 310,000 acres, covering the Teton mountain range, glacial lakes and part of the Jackson Hole valley.

The Tetons first received government protection in 1897 when Congress created the Teton Forest Reserve out of land not included in Yellowstone. As early as 1918, congressmen were floating bills to create a larger sanctuary by expanding Yellowstone's boundary southward to include the Teton Range and northern portions of Jackson Hole. However, local residents fought and defeated three attempts to federalize land

in Jackson Hole. In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Jackson Hole National Monument. In 1950, the original 1929 park and the 1943 monument were united to establish Grand Teton National Park with its present boundaries.

History of the area: Lewis and Clark passed near Jackson Hole and headed eastward in late 1806. Beaver brought notoriety to the area at the turn of the 19th century. In 1840, mountain man Jim Bridger led Army Captain William Reynolds' survey party through the valley. In 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant declared neighboring Yellowstone the world's first national park and drew attention to a part of the country that was little known to the civilized world. The Tetons were so attracting their share of visitors, many of whom came to stay.



What is there to do in this park? Biking, Boating, Fishing, Float trips, Horseback riding, Mountaineering, Skiing, Snowshoeing, Sleigh Rides, Snowmobiling. Of course, today we didn't do any of those things. We were sightseeing, and photographing. It was not the best days for photographing. In the afternoon light clouds with light sunshine made photographing a little difficult. The light sky blended with the light mountains - then the foreground was too dark.

Our trip today took us on a 40 mile loop drive. The majestic Teton Range was the backdrop for the trip.





One of our stops was at the Cunningham Cabin. The cabin and surrounding 160 acres of land was homesteaded by J. Pierce Cunningham in the 1880s. The Cunningham Cabin is one



of the best of the few remaining homestead cabins in Jackson Hole.

The cabin you see in the photo was the first building Cunningham constructed. The “dogtrot” style, common in eastern states, consists of two small cabins joined with an open, covered breezeway. Logs were secured and joined at the corners with saddle notches. Cracks between the logs were chinked with dirt mortar and often reinforced with willow wands. Sapling poles were used to construct a roof upon which earth was piled. Floors were made of dirt that was wetted with water, compacted and swept.



We noticed the “buck-and-Rail” fences on the property. These fences were an innovation of the first pioneer ranchers. This fencing is named for the X-shaped braces or “cross bucks” used to support the horizontal rails. The fences are self-supporting and used where rails were easily obtained.



While we were there we noticed prairie dogs running around, so I took the opportunity to get “up close and friendly” with them. I still say they look like squirrels!



Formed by the confluence of three tiny headwater streams in western Wyoming and Yellowstone National Park, the Snake starts out as a small river flowing west and south into Jackson Lake. Its first 50



miles run through the valley of Jackson Hole, which cuts between the Teton Range and the Continental Divide. The Snake takes a large bend northwest through Snake River Canyon, cutting through the Snake River Range and into eastern Idaho.





Yep! I was here too! The Snake River is visible in this photo, as well as the ones in the page above. It's really a spectacular sight!



A portion of Jackson Lake is visible in this photo. Jackson Lake is in the upper end of the Teton Range.



While we were in Yellowstone the animals seem to have been very elusive. Fortunately we found this herd of approximately 50 animals in a field near the road. I was careful to stay far away from them. I understand they can run VERY fast - almost 35 m/p/h. A human can only run about 26 m/p/h. Of course, we old people can hobble along a little slower than that!



We drove to the top of Signal Mountain. The 5 mile drive ends at 800 feet above Jackson Hole for a panoramic view.



We spent a long day admiring the views. Alan was a patient driver and stopped at most of the overlooks. After our drive we stopped for dinner in Jackson at Bubba's Barbecue. We all enjoyed the BBQ brisket with its side dishes. That was a perfect end to our 5 week adventure through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada. Now it's **California, Here I Come!!!!** Tomorrow morning we make a 832 mile sprint for home!

Again, thanks for coming along with me on this excursion!  
Bye for now - - Earl

We noticed deep canyons between each of the mountains