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To the Ice: George Bird Grinnell's 1887 Ascent of Grinnell Glacier

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To the Ice

George Bird Grinnell's 1887 Ascent of Grinnell Glacier

Richard Vaughan

... Ice is present in many of the moraines, but only in two places did I see what could really be denominated glaciers. These are both on the south side of the stream. One forms the source for the 6th lake which is an arm of the 5th, the other is at the head of the chain of Swift Current lakes. The waters of this 5th lake are green and milky true glacier waters in fact and a line extends across the water of 5th lake which is somewhat hour glass in shape showing where the milky water of 6th meet the clearer water glacial lake and which flows into 5th. Thus I estimate this glacier at least a mile in width, where visible, but a portion of it is concealed behind another high mountain how far it is impossible to say. Its course, if [it] continues, would bring it to another glacier, the one at the head of the chain of lakes. The thickness of the mass of ice can scarcely be less than 100 feet and may be much more. We had no pack outfit and were unable to approach nearer to it than four or five miles.¹

*September 14, 1885
Swift Current Valley, Montana
Travel diary of George Bird Grinnell*

ON September 15th, 1885, George Bird Grinnell and his guide tried one more time to “get to the ice,” but high winds and rugged terrain forced them back to camp.² Even more frustrating was the realization that their dwindling supplies meant they would not have another chance to reach the glaciers that year. Nonetheless, Grinnell, a patient man, assumed he would return to the region in 1886 and continue his explorations up the Swift Current Valley.³

The 1885 trip marked the beginning of Grinnell's relationship with the wilderness region that became, partly through his efforts, Glacier National Park.⁴ While he was neither the first white to explore the region, nor the first to locate glaciers tucked into its mountains, Grinnell was the first to promote the region as a place of incredible natural beauty and ultimately he helped lead the campaign for the preservation of the area as a park.⁵ That, however, was all in the future; as he retraced his steps down the Swift Current Valley, all he could think about was a return trip and getting back to the ice.

Grinnell's Early Travels in the American West

Although new to this pocket of Montana, Grinnell was no stranger to the American West. His Western travel experiences had begun fifteen years earlier when he served as a member of O. C. Marsh's first Yale Paleontological Expedition.⁶ A few years later he was spending summers hunting buffalo and elk on the plains of Nebraska and Kansas with the leaders of the famed Pawnee Scouts, Frank and Luther North.⁷ In 1874 he served as a scientist on Custer's Black Hills Expedition, and a year later found himself doing the same on the Ludlow Yellowstone Reconnaissance mission. Both trips brought him into the territory of Montana, but only briefly and well to the east of the mountains.⁸



George Bird Grinnell, circa 1880s.

Portrait from the Library of Congress collection, dated 1880-1890



James Willard Schultz in 1889.
Montana State University Digital Initiatives Collection

Grinnell was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1849, and raised in Manhattan on the former estate of American naturalist and painter John James Audubon.⁹ As the son of a merchant, and later stock broker, Grinnell was educated first by Audubon's widow, then at a private boarding school, and finally at Yale (B.A., 1870). Besides traveling to the American West, Grinnell's post-college years were filled with an unsuccessful attempt to run the family stock brokerage, the publication of his first articles in a young sportsman's newspaper known as *Forest and Stream* (*F&S*), and work as an assistant to Professor Marsh at Yale, where he completed his Ph.D. in osteology in 1880. While working for Marsh, he took on the additional responsibilities of serving as *F&S*'s natural history editor. Over the next few years, Grinnell and his father began purchasing stock in the Forest and Stream Publishing Company and by 1880 were the majority stockholders. Soon after, George returned to New York City to become company president and editor of the

newspaper. As editor, Grinnell worked closely with the paper's freelance correspondents who were spread across the country. One writer in particular, James Willard Schultz, his future guide, captured his interest through his writing and his knowledge of a little known area in northwest Montana.¹⁰ "Fired by his accounts," Grinnell asked Schultz to serve as his first Montana guide.¹¹

Schultz had come to Montana looking for adventure as a teenager in the 1870s. By 1885, he had spent much of the previous decade straddling two worlds that had already begun colliding: the expanding sphere of the territory's white settlers, and the declining domain of the region's indigenous peoples. When not employed by legendary trader Joseph Kipp, Schultz lived with the Blackfoot. He became fluent in their language, fought side by side with their warriors, and married into the Pikuni band. Perhaps the most surprising facet of this bicultural life was that Schultz had also begun a literary career. In the early 1880s he began writing accounts of his hunting forays for *F&S*. These occasional stories were the beginning of a writing career that lasted until his death in 1947, and that gave both his birth name and his Blackfoot name (Apikuni) worldwide recognition.¹²

After agreeing to serve as Grinnell's guide, the two met in Fort Benton, Montana, and began a month-long excursion by wagon, horse, and foot into the mountains that were then part of the Blackfoot Reservation. Recalling his first impression of Grinnell many years later, Schultz wrote ". . . the moment he got down from the stage and we shook hands, I knew. 'Here,' said I to myself, 'is no tenderfoot.'" ¹³ Over the next few weeks Grinnell proved him right. By the September 14 diary entry Grinnell had explored the Upper and Lower Saint Mary's lakes; traversed mountains, valleys, and streams; met and hunted with the region's indigenous peoples (Kootenai and Blackfoot); shot his first bighorn sheep (resulting in the naming of Single Shot Mountain); and seen evidence of glacial activity, particularly as he traveled up the Swift Current Valley.

As was his custom when traveling, each night, or within a few days, Grinnell recorded the events of the trip in a small leather notebook. These trip diaries were then consulted and expanded into multipart articles for *F&S*.¹⁴ The articles mirrored the diaries, while providing Grinnell the opportunity to expand and embellish the events of each trip. The diaries, on the other hand, stand as his first impression of the people and places he encountered and provide more chronologic and geographic detail.

Once back in New York, Grinnell quickly slipped back into the busy world of publishing and the causes important to him. He hoped to return to the Saint Mary's Country in 1886, but it soon became apparent that it was going to be a very busy year. Grinnell often complained

that work kept him chained to his *F&S* office (so much so that his printed note paper had a drawing of a man chained to an office desk). The tether holding him this year was the near extinction of America's small birds.

By 1886 Grinnell and *F&S* were one of the leading voices of an expanding American conservation movement.¹⁵ Grinnell's weekly editorials touched on topics ranging from local game protection legislation to conditions in America's lone national park (Yellowstone). Consequently, when a February 11 editorial announced the formation of a new organization dedicated to preserving wild birds in America, it did not seem out of place. Created to help put an end to the destruction of birds for use in the fashion industry, and named after the man whose estate Grinnell had grown up on, the Audubon Society was wildly popular — membership ultimately approached 50,000.¹⁶ Grinnell and *F&S* fronted the entire operation of the organization, charging no membership fees and publishing the society's new periodical, *The Audubon Magazine*. In return, members served as a grassroots lobbying group, sending letters to politicians expressing their outrage over current hunting laws. While Grinnell could only afford to keep the organization going for twenty-two months, the die had been cast and the first Audubon Society stands as the forerunner to today's state, national, and international Audubon Societies.

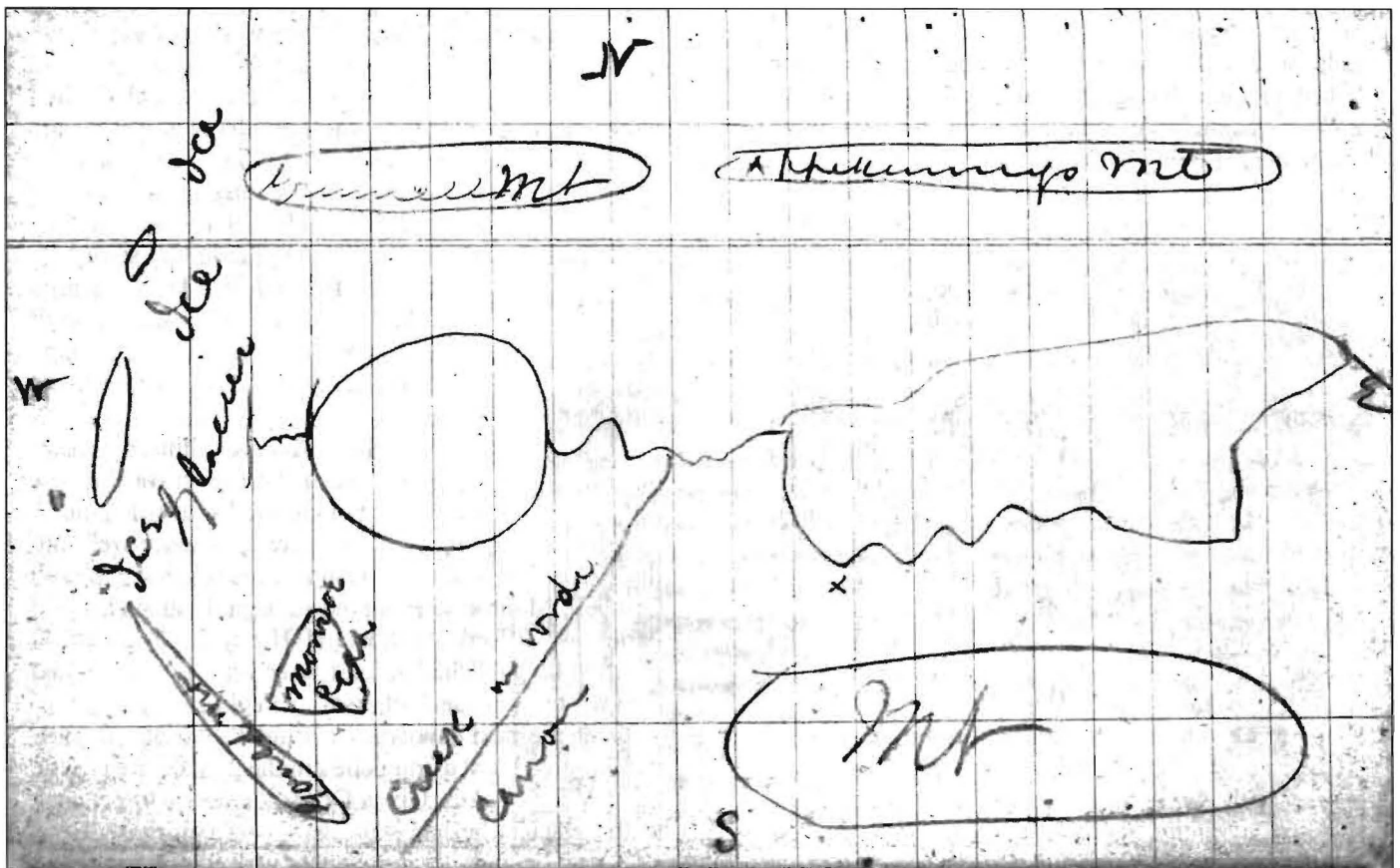
Returning to Montana and Discovering Glaciers

Despite the heavy workload, Grinnell remained hopeful that he might be able to get away for a second Montana trip in the fall of 1886. By August, however, he conceded and wrote Schultz:

You cannot conceive what a disappointment it is for me to give up all hope of seeing you this autumn and in making another trip with you. It is something that I had thought about for almost a year, and I had always hoped that something would turn up sooner or later to make it possible for me to go with you deep into the mountains whose [outskirts] we explored last year.

It is useless to grumble about it. I hope that next year matters may so arrange themselves that we may make a trip together. I shall never be satisfied until I find out what lies behind the [frowning] peaks that [surround] St. Mary's, and get close to some of the glaciers that [furrow] those mountains. Let us think of the trip as only postponed a year.¹⁷

Over the next year, Grinnell planned the trip in the little free time he had. He hoped that two close friends, Luther North and George Gould, could join him on the 1887 trip. As it turned out, only Gould made the trip. After months of planning and correspondence, the



The map Grinnell drew of the valley in the back of his 1887 trip diary.

two agreed to meet in Lethbridge, Canada, on October 1, 1887.

George Huntington Gould and George Bird Grinnell had been introduced to each other by Gould's brother, Charlie, who had known Grinnell at Yale. George Gould attended Harvard (B.A. 1872) followed by law school at the University of the City of New York (LL.B. 1877). After law school he spent a few years working for the Equitable Life Assurance Society in New York City and then moved to Santa Barbara, California, where his other brother, Frederick, was living. In Santa Barbara he practiced law for the next forty years, specializing in water-related issues, and invested wisely in real estate.¹⁸ The 1887 trip was the first of several trips he made with Grinnell. At various times in their writings, both Grinnell and Schultz refer to Gould as an invalid, but it is never made clear if this is intended as a joke or if he had a physical ailment that prevented him from participating in some outdoor activities.¹⁹ Despite living on opposite coasts, the two remained close friends until Gould's death in 1926, corresponding about their lives and often editing each other's manuscripts. Gould often contributed to *F&S*, writing under the pseudonym H. G. Dulong (an anagram of G. H. Gould).²⁰ Because Gould's *F&S* articles often took the form of poems, Grinnell often referred to him as "The Rhymer."²¹

From Lethbridge, Grinnell and Gould headed to a camp on the Belly River where they met Schultz. From the Belly they traveled southwest by wagon and horseback, arriving at the northern end of Lower Saint Mary's Lake several days later. In the account of this trip published in *F&S* during the winter of 1887-1888, Grinnell's romantic side took charge as he expressed his excitement at being back:

How often, in dreams of the night or day, have I revisited these scenes during the years that have passed since last I left these happy shores. How often, in fancy, have I seated myself on some rock on the point of old Singleshot and gazed over the beautiful scene. The two great lakes, the rocky walls of the sky-reached mountains which inclose them, the gray slide rock at my feet, the brown expanse of level prairie at the Inlet, the dark pine-clad foothills and the yellow grass of the little parks, the matchless blue of the unclouded sky were all present down the gorge at my feet I would seem to hear the faint roll of the ruffed grouse, as he summoned — in vain at this season — his harem to his side, and then, at first indistinct, but each movement more plainly heard and calling all my senses into alertness, would come the rattle of the hale which told me that a sheep was picking its way with dainty step over the slide rock, or was bounding with nervous leaps from rock to rock up or down the mountainside. But always before the crucial moment came when the noble game should



George Huntington Gould.

Harvard University Archives

present itself to my eyes, the vision faded and I found that the St. Mary's Lakes were far away.²²

The plan, on arrival, was to locate a boat Schultz had hidden nearby and then to transport all the gear up to the inlet between the two lakes. There they would make a base camp to fan out on short hunting excursions. On reaching the lake, however, Schultz determined that they needed more manpower to get the gear and horses up the lake. Schultz knew that his friend J. B. "Jack" Monroe was hunting in the Pike Lake area, so he sent Grinnell off to find him. Grinnell and Monroe returned the next day, and the four travelers began their trek into the mountains.

Little is known about Jack Monroe, although he apparently remained a resident of the region for the next forty years. He became one of Grinnell's favorite guides, and the two kept up an active correspondence well into the 1920s. No doubt as a result of his relationship with Grinnell, Monroe later served as a guide to such luminaries as Gifford Pinchot and Henry L. Stimson. In addition he published at least three articles in *F&S* and also wrote occasional letters to the editor.²³

Over the next few weeks Grinnell, Gould, Schultz, and Monroe hunted and fished in the general area of the Saint Mary's Lakes. Given Grinnell's desire to get back to the glaciers he had seen two years before, it seems odd that he did not immediately head up the Swift Current Valley. Gould, however, had informed Grinnell



First known photograph of Grinnell Glacier taken by Lt. John H. Beacom while traveling with Grinnell in 1887.

that he had to return home by the end of the month, so perhaps Grinnell, serving as host, felt his friend's time would be most enjoyed if they stayed in the Lakes area hunting and fishing. As it turned out, they had much better success at hunting than in 1885, largely due to arriving later in the fall when the goats and sheep had moved down the mountainsides foraging for food. On October 25, Gould, led by Monroe, headed back to Lethbridge and returned to California.

Relaxing in camp on October 28, Grinnell saw a man and some horses "coming up the trail on [the] opposite side of [the] lake."²⁴ Grinnell thought that it was Joseph Kipp, "but the glass showed that it was a solider outfit."²⁵ On the morning of October 29, the man road into camp and introduced himself as Lieutenant John H. Beacom of the United States Army, 3rd Infantry.²⁶ Beacom was stationed at Fort Shaw but spent much of his time patrolling the border region for horse thieves and whiskey traders. Beacom and Grinnell hit it off right away, and soon the young officer was invited on the next leg of the trip. Beacom agreed to meet them the next day, where Swift Current Creek enters Lower Saint Mary's Lake. Grinnell, Schultz, and Monroe, back from escorting Gould, packed up their

camp and left for the Swift Current that evening by moonlight, with Grinnell taking the horses up the east side of the lower lake and Schultz and Monroe floating the gear by boat.

Joined by Beacom on October 30, the foursome started up the Swift Current Valley, camping about one and a half miles below the 5th lake. In both the 1885 and 1887 diaries, Grinnell refers to the Swift Current lakes by the numbers one through six. The first four of these



Grinnell's favorite St. Mary's guide, J. B. 'Jack' Monroe, shown here with another hunter.

lakes, moving up the valley, no longer exist, having been submerged into the man-made Lake Sherburne in the 1920s.²⁷

On October 31 the group was up before dawn and headed toward the southern of the two glaciers Grinnell had seen two years before.²⁸ The path they chose was around the northern end of the 5th lake and then down its western shore. Continuing on horseback they crossed the land mass that separated the 5th and 6th lakes, emerging on a hill overlooking the 6th lake. Hugging a steep mountain along the western shore, they continued until reaching a small stream at the end of the lake where, Grinnell states, “. . . Mr. Beacom took a picture and then we rode up the creek to a snow slide.”²⁹ The foursome explored a little of the area above the lake but realized it was too late to go farther. At about 2:00 p.m. they started back toward camp, Grinnell and Beacom retracing their steps along the western shores of the lakes, while Schultz and Monroe swung around on the eastern side.

The next day Grinnell, Schultz and Monroe packed extra gear on the mules and “started for Grinnell’s lake, as we have named the one which flows into the fifth Swift Current Lake.”³⁰ Beacom, apparently unable to climb “owing to an old hurt,” left the trio and returned to his camp back at the Saint Mary’s Lakes.³¹ This time the trio followed the path Schultz and Monroe had used the day before, along the eastern shores of the two lakes. The 1887 diary continues:

It is very rough and narrow and much worse than the road B. and I took yesterday going home. The mules are not used to packing and would often go off the trail and besides did not understand how to avoid the trees standing close together. On the black mule we had put the bedding and one of my quilts got badly torn. So also did my trousers on both knees. Altogether it was a most vexatious ride and I used more profanity than I usually do. Just after my quilt got torn we repacked the black mule with the stirrup hitch and thenceforward had less trouble. Camped at head of lake intending tomorrow, if fair, to try to make the glacier. Beacom proposes to call this Grinnell’s Glacier. I protested, and he may not carry out his intention.³²

Just who named the glacier after Grinnell has often been debated, but this account clearly indicates that it was Beacom. Since he had left Grinnell by this time, he likely offered the name up at the same time the 6th lake was named Grinnell’s Lake, probably the day before. Years later, after Beacom’s death, Beacom’s brother, an attorney in Cleveland, sent Grinnell a quote from Beacom’s own 1887 diary in which he describes the trip and confirms it was the army lieutenant who gave the glacier its name.³³

Summarizing the events of November 2, Grinnell’s



Grinnell standing in front of one of the Glacier Hotels in 1916.

Author's collection, taken by American ornithologist, and one of the founders of the National Audubon Society, T. Gilbert Pearson

diary begins, “A most important day, for we reached the glacier, discovered a new lake, a most beautiful falls, true moraines at foot of glacier and killed a superb ram.”³⁴ He follows that brief summary with more details:

We breakfasted by moonlight and started in the gray dawn on foot for the glacier. Crossed the snowslide, about ¼ mile from camp and kept up the valley on the E side, keeping well away from the creek to avoid willows and brown swamps. Less than a mile from camp we crossed a little creek which runs down from a cañon coming in from the southeast and soon after passing this found ourselves at the edge of the timber. The firs and spruces here are very large some of them I should think 2½ to 3 ft. in diameter at the base.

Beyond the edge of the timber was a grass opening, dotted here and there with low spruces and passing through this we stood on the border of a beautiful lake. It is perhaps a mile long and not quite as wide, its water of a clear green, not quite clear, but much less muddy than I supposed would be the case; to the left of it or S stand the solid wall of a peak which we named Monroe's Peak; back of it i.e. at head of lake there is a narrow fringe of willow and open and rocky lodge pine crossed of small extent and then rises a thousand feet of precipice over which plunges the water fall from the glacier; on the north Grinnell's Mt. rises abruptly in a series of rocky ledges to a great height. Over all is the tremendous amount of ice of the glacier and about that the snow patched vertical walls of the knife edged mts. Here we stopped for a while and gazed in wonder and admiration. On the shore of the lake was the track of a small elk, quite fresh, and another track where some large animal had recently trotted along very swiftly. We took pictures looking up and to [the] right and left, three in all. The light was not good, the sun not having yet risen over the mountain tops.³⁵

The explorers proceeded along the lake through thick willows and brush, eventually reaching the foot of the falls. After a brief rest in grassy meadow they "clambered slowly upward."³⁶ The falls kept the rocks slippery, and the need to constantly renegotiate finger and toe placements made the going hard and slow. About two thirds of the way up, they reached a shelf that held debris that had been pushed down from the glacier. "Here were enormous peaks of drift from boulders the size of a small horse down to pebbles the size of a pin head. Some as sharply angular as where they fell from the cliff above onto the ice, others worn and wounded by attrition against the subjacent rock. Most of this drift was larger, the finer gravel having been carried on and over the falls into the valley below where it was spread out in a great mass covering many acres."³⁷

As they ascended they kept an eye on the falls that served as their map upward. "Great masses of white ice" jettied outward from the falls, while in other places the water dropped down "a sharp incline for a hundred feet or more."³⁸ Keeping to the right of a "great mass of [morainal] drift," they continued working their way up on until they reached "a point just below the lowest edge of the glacier."³⁹ From this vantage, Grinnell could begin to get a sense of the glacier's size:



A 2004 picture of Grinnell Lake, with the Angel Wing (Monroe's Peak) behind it and the falls from the glacier above.

A 2004 picture looking down on Grinnell Lake, from Mt. Grinnell.
Author's photo



A 2004 picture looking up towards the glacier — now divided into two separate glaciers.
Author's photo



The glacier lies in a basin two miles wide by one and one-half deep and consists of two principal masses, one below which covers far more ground than the one above, and another on a ledge above the first which is very thick and is constantly falling over onto the mass below. It is difficult to estimate the thickness of the ice, but from the lower edge of the lower mass where by melting it thins off into nothing to the comb of the glacier, I should judge the [vertical] distance to be 600 feet. The thickness of the upper mass cannot be much less than 300, although from immediately below it seems less than that. Scattered on the surface of the ice at the foot of the upper ice cliff were a number of great masses of blue ice that had fallen down since the last snow, but the greater part of the glacier was covered with new fallen snow which obscured any traces of recent action.⁴⁰

Although he had “denominated” the ice mass a glacier in 1885, Grinnell was now compiling observational evidence to help prove that declaration. In addition to noting the thickness of the ice and the debris found on the surface, he also noted the milky water he had seen in the 6th lake in 1885 was not present in 1887. Grinnell explained this as being due to the colder temperatures found in November versus those found in September of 1885. As a result, the ice was no longer moving down the mountain pushing glacial dust into the stream and then into the lakes — or as he described it in the diary, “the glacier is frozen up and will not move again until spring.”⁴¹

Unable to reach the upper section of the glacier, the trio lunched on the lower section and took in the sights. Soon the temperature began to drop and they decided they had better keep moving or begin their descent. Just then they spotted a bighorn. Grinnell loaded his rifle, dropped to his knee, and fired. Grinnell was sure he had hit the ram but was also unwilling to give up his quickly dwindling time on the ice to find out. Instead, Jack Monroe retrieved the ram while Grinnell and Schultz continued exploring. Finally, realizing they needed to head back to camp, the trio headed down the mountain.

The diary reveals no detail about their route down. Grinnell’s published account suggests they hung to the side of the newly named Grinnell Mountain, rather than climbing over the precipice at the foot of the glacier. Regardless of the route, they were in store for one more amazing sight. From the diary:

We had gone but a short distance, when we passed on the lower side of a great snow drift in a gully. The snow had melted from above and the water had tunnelled [*sic*] under it below, so that a heavy roof stretched across the ravine. Jack went into it to get a drink and then called to me to come and

see it. I entered and was astonished at its beauty. It was eight to ten feet from floor to roof and perhaps thirty ft. wide and sixty to seventy long. A drift of new snow lay in the bottom of the ravine. The roof seemed not to be more than eight in. or a foot thick and admitted the light quite freely. It was beautiful sky blue ice and had melted from the bottom so as to form a curious pattern of squares the corners where the squares meet bring the lowest points of the roof and the water dripping from them. . . . It was lovely. Going on we kept down the mt. crossing one or two bad ledges where dogs refused to follow and got to camp at dark. Feasted on sheep meat.⁴²

After the excitement and exertion of the climb, the next few days were spent relaxing in camp, writing up notes, and packing for the trip back down the valley. By November 5, they were back on the lower end of Lower Saint Mary’s Lake where they could see Beacom’s camp across the river. Carrying a quarter of the sheep on his horse, Grinnell rode over to see Beacom and presented the meat to the soldiers. Additionally, Grinnell told Beacom “about the ice in G’s Basin,” and presented him with a “sketch of the valley and my ideas as to the glacier.”⁴³

The last two weeks of the trip were spent working their way back to Lethbridge, with occasional side trips to see the sights, hunt, and visit with friends of Schultz and Monroe. Monroe departed at an undisclosed date, but Schultz stayed with Grinnell all the way to Lethbridge. Grinnell’s diary entry for November 20 simply notes, “Parted rather tearfully from Schultz, who returns to Agency at once.”⁴⁴ A day later Grinnell was eastbound on the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

Resuming Life in New York

As was his custom, Grinnell returned home and almost immediately began converting his diary into a massive eighteen-part serial account for *F&S*.⁴⁵ In fact, the article appears to have been started even before he reached the East Coast, as a partial draft appears in the back of one of the two diary volumes. Gould contributed three parts to the series, including an approximately 1,500 word poem.⁴⁶ Part One of the serial (“The Rock Climbers”) appeared on December 29, 1887, and the remaining parts were published weekly, with one exception, until May 3, 1888.

Back in New York, Grinnell jumped right back into his busy life. In addition to writing up the trip account, he managed the final days of the Audubon Society, while taking on a new cause as a cofounder (with Theodore Roosevelt) of the Boone and Crockett Club.⁴⁷ He also began work on the first of what became more than twenty books he would write over the next forty years — on subjects ranging from ethnographic studies of plains Indians to adventure stories for boys.⁴⁸ Grinnell

continued to travel back to the Saint Mary's region, whenever time permitted, well into the 1920s. His relationship with *F&S* lasted until 1921, ten years after he sold the publication.⁴⁹ When not writing books or *F&S* articles and editorials, Grinnell published dozens of articles in scholarly journals, as well as more general pieces in the day's most widely read periodicals — often offering his paternalistic views on the conditions and treatment of the Native Americans of the day.⁵⁰

Glacier National Park

Although always wary of getting officially involved in government/Indian affairs, Grinnell did accept an appointment to serve as a commissioner to negotiate the purchases of much of the Saint Mary's region from the Blackfoot in 1895. The purchase ultimately opened the region to become a National Park, but contemporary historians have questioned not only Grinnell's reasons for serving as a commissioner but also his fairness toward the Blackfoot.⁵¹

One of the popular-press pieces Grinnell wrote, entitled "Crown of the Continent," appeared in *The Century Magazine* in 1901.⁵² The article took Grinnell's descriptions of the region's beauty to a new and larger audience. The call for turning the region into a national park quickly followed and for the next ten years Grinnell's voice worked the halls of Congress while his pen urged the public to let their voices be heard as well. Finally, in 1910, the Saint Mary's region officially became Glacier National Park.⁵³

Grinnell remained a New Yorker all his life, ultimately dying there in 1938. His last trip to the glacier that he first climbed in 1887 was in 1926 at the age of 76. His diary for the trip is brief and his tone seems a little more possessive about the region, referring to the features named after him as "my mt." and "my lake."⁵⁴ Always the scientific observer, Grinnell noted, "the glacier is melting very fast and the amount of water coming from it is great. All these glaciers are receding rapidly and after a time will disappear."⁵⁵ Grinnell managed one more trip back to the park a year later but did not return to the glacier. He did, however, see his old climbing companions, Schultz and Monroe; it may have been the last time he saw either.

Besides the firsthand account of Grinnell's ascent of the glacier, the 1887 diary contains one other treasure — a drawing of the valley — probably created at the same time as the one he gave Beacom on November 5. The drawing is a bird's eye view of the basin looking down on the valley. Grinnell attempts to provide some geographic perspective by placing North and South indicators at the top and bottom of the page, but their axis should be pivoted roughly 45° to the East. In

the center of the page are two unidentified lakes, one small round one to the left (the newly discovered lake, or today's Grinnell Lake), and a longer one to the right (the 6th lake, or today's Lake Josephine). Above the lakes sit two mountains labeled "Grinnell Mt" and "Appekunnys Mt" (considered a single Grinnell Mountain today.) To the left of the round lake are the words "Ice Glacier," "Ice," "Ice," with two thin ovals to the left of the words. The ovals might represent ice masses or the rock peaks of today's Garden Wall. Below the glacier is "Gould Mt," with the triangular "Monroe Peak" sitting between it and the round lake. While Gould Mountain, a tribute to "The Rhymer" remains on today's maps, "Monroe Peak," named in honor of Grinnell's favorite guide, is today's Angel Wing. To the right of these two mountains is a "Creek in woods/canon" (Cataract Creek), flowing into a stream running between



George Bird Grinnell's last climb to the glacier in 1926 at age 76.

the two lakes, while further to the right is an unnamed mountain (Mount Allen).⁵⁵ Two other marks, a squiggly line running down from the glacier into the round lake and a small x on the southwestern shore of the longer lake, represent Grinnell Falls and the campsite the trio used on those cold November nights.

In a letter to Gould, written some months after the trip, Grinnell explains that he gave the first drawing to Beacom, who indicated that he would probably use it to produce an official army map.⁵⁶ If Beacom ever did that, the map has not been identified. Grinnell produced at least three other maps of the region, covering the periods 1885-1887, 1885-1888, and 1885-1892. The first appeared in an 1888 *F&S* article on the birds of the Saint Mary's region. In the article, Grinnell credits Beacom and another army officer, S. C. Robertson, with assisting in the creation of the map.⁵⁷ The other two maps, housed today in the Glacier National Park Archives, range from a hand-drawn map of the Saint Mary's and Swiftcurrent valleys to a more professional shaded relief map of the entire northeast section of today's park.⁵⁸ The nomenclature of the valley evolved as each map was produced; named features appeared, changed, or disappeared altogether as each map became more detailed than the one before — but all can be traced back to the 1887 drawing.

In 1919, Grinnell's friend Madison Grant published a history of Glacier National Park for the National Park Service. In a footnote he suggests that a more suitable name for today's Swiftcurrent Lake would have been Lake Grinnell.⁵⁹ Doubtless Grant thought it fitting because that lake rests in the center of the Swiftcurrent Valley, catching the waters of both the glaciers Grinnell spotted in 1885. Today the Many Glacier Hotel sits on the shore of that lake, and it does seem an appropriate feature to name after Grinnell. Perhaps, however, George Bird Grinnell would have thought it more appropriate that those interested in seeing the geologic features that bear his name should have to do a little more hiking of their own.

NOTES

1. George Bird Grinnell diary, September 14, 1885, MS.5 Item 302, George Bird Grinnell Collection, Braun Research Library, Southwest Museum of the American Indian, Los Angeles, California (hereafter Grinnell Collection).
2. George Bird Grinnell diary, September 15, 1885, MS.5 Item 302, Grinnell Collection.
3. Although spelled as one word today, Grinnell always spelled Swift Current as two words.
4. For an account of the 1885 trip and several other Grinnell Saint Mary's trips, mostly based on his published accounts, see Gerald A. Diertert, *Grinnell's Glacier: George Bird Grinnell and Glacier National Park* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press, 1992).
5. Hunters, trappers, and prospectors were probably the first whites to reach the Saint Mary's region. Railroad surveys, beginning in the 1850s, brought more organized efforts to explore the region, as did U.S. military and boundary patrols after the Civil War. Hugh Monroe may have been the first white man to see glaciers in the region, while a military expedition in 1873, led by John Van Orsdale and Charles A. Woodruff, was the first to confirm the existence of glaciers. A few years before Grinnell reached the

region, Raphael Pumpelly saw the same glacier that is Pumpelly Glacier today. Van Orsdale is also believed to be the first to suggest that the site be set aside as a national park; he did so in 1883. Grinnell's first suggestion that the region become a park, on the other hand, was not until 1891; see Grinnell to R. S. Yard, October 27, 1927, *George Bird Grinnell Papers* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1998) microfilm reel 42, frame 696-697, (hereafter Grinnell Papers with the appropriate reel and frame numbers). For general park histories, see Madison Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park Montana* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1919); Ralph L. Beals, *History of Glacier National Park: With Particular Emphasis on the Northern Developments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935); Donald H. Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park: An Administrative History*, with editing and new material by Maynard C. Bowers (West Glacier, MT: Glacier Natural History Association, 1960); C. W. Buchholtz, *Man in Glacier* (West Glacier, MT: Glacier Natural History Association, 1976).

6. For a detailed description of Grinnell's first trip West, see Richard Vaughan, "Broad Are Nebraska's Rolling Plains: The Early Writings of George Bird Grinnell," *Nebraska History*, 83 (Spring 2002): 36-49.
7. Much has been written on the North Brothers and their Pawnee Battalion; most easily accessible is Donald F. Danker, "The North Brothers and the Pawnee Scouts," in *The Nebraska Indian War Reader, 1865-1877*, ed. R. Eli Paul (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 73-87.
8. Grinnell briefly crossed into Montana Territory as the Custer-led expedition arched southwest along the Dakota-Montana border, probably on July 15 and 16, 1874. A year later he traveled overland from Carroll, in today's Fergus County, entering the park from the north. For scientific contributions to the Black Hills trip, see George Bird Grinnell, "Paleontological Report" in *Report of a Reconnaissance of the Black Hills of Dakota, Made in the Summer of 1874*, by William Ludlow (Washington, DC: GPO, 1875), 75-78; "Zoological Report," 79-101. For scientific contributions to the Yellowstone trip, see George Bird Grinnell, "Zoological Report," in *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*, by William Ludlow (Washington, DC: GPO, 1876), 59-92; George Bird Grinnell and Ed. S. Dana, "Geological Report" in *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*, by William Ludlow (Washington, DC: GPO, 1876), 93-137.
9. To date, there is no comprehensive biography of Grinnell, although numerous short profiles and longer dissertations have been produced over the years. The work of John Reiger is a good starting point, especially his edited version of Grinnell's memoirs; see John H. Reiger, *The Passing of the Great West: Selected Papers of George Bird Grinnell* (New York: Winchester Press, 1972).
10. Schultz's first hunting trip in the Saint Mary's region was in 1883. He returned again in 1884 and documented his trip in an article he sent to Grinnell for publication. The article ultimately was not published until after Grinnell had made his own 1885 trip; see J. W. Schultz, "To Chief Mountain," *Forest and Stream*, December 3, 1885. For more on Schultz's life in Montana, see Warren L. Hanna, *The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz (Apikuni)* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986). Sadly, as Hanna and others have pointed out, Schultz's memory of events and dates is almost always questionable, and his skills at telling a good story often cross over into his nonfiction writings. He wrote several accounts of his hunting trips with Grinnell, but dates and details in one account often conflicted with what he wrote in others.
11. Grinnell to R. S. Yard, October 27, 1927, Grinnell Papers, reel 42, frame 696-697.
12. The spelling of Schultz's Blackfoot name changed over the years. Today it is usually spelled Apikuni. Grinnell, more often than not, spelled it Appekunny. Other versions that appear under Schultz's own byline include Ap-wa-cun-na, Ap-we-cun-na, and Ap-pe-cun-ny. See Hanna, *The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz*, xiv.
13. James Willard Schultz, "Famous Forest and Stream Writers whom I Have Known," *Forest and Stream*, August 16, 1913.

14. On returning to New York, Grinnell's 1885 diary was quickly expanded into a fourteen-part *F&S* serial, see George Bird Grinnell, [Yo, pseud.] "To the Walled-in Lakes," *Forest and Stream*, December 10, 1885 to March 18, 1886. Also, see Diettert, *Grinnell's Glacier*.
15. There are many histories of the conservation movement in America; among those, see John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3rd ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Roderick F. Nash, ed., *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990). Especially helpful in placing Grinnell's role in the movement in context, is, Douglas Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper, 2009). For a look at Grinnell's role in one particular aspect of the movement, see Michael Punke, *Last Stand: George Bird Grinnell, the Battle to Save the Buffalo, and the Birth of the New West* (New York: Collins, 2007).
16. John G. Mitchell, "A Man Called Bird." *Audubon*, March 1987, 81-104. Also, see John G. Mitchell, "A Man Called Bird" in *The Man Who Would Damn the Amazon and Other Accounts from Afield* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 223-265.
17. Grinnell to J. W. Schultz, August 23, 1886, Grinnell Papers, reel 1, frame 45.
18. For biographical data on Gould, see David F. Myrick, "The Gould Families" in *Montecito and Santa Barbara*, vol. 2 *The Days of the Great Estates* (Glendale, CA: Trans-Anglo Books, 1991), 259-268.
19. For Grinnell's reference, see George Bird Grinnell, [Yo, pseud.] "The Rock Climbers, Part 3, A Whisky Trader's Camp," *Forest and Stream*, January 12, 1888. For Schultz's reference, see James Willard Schultz, "More Mountain Trails," in *Blackfeet and Buffalo: Memories of Life among the Indians*, ed. Keith C. Seele (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 91-103.
20. Gould wrote more than twenty articles, letters, and poems for *F&S* between 1883 and 1908, all using the pseudonym H. G. Dulog. He again collaborated with Grinnell in 1890, to document another of their Saint Mary's trips; see George Bird Grinnell [Yo, pseud.], "Slide Rock from Many Mountains," *Forest and Stream*, January 2, 1890 to October 16, 1890.
21. Most *F&S* writers and many writers for other periodicals of the day used pseudonyms. Grinnell used several over the years, but the majority of his *F&S* work, including his accounts of the 1885 and 1887 trips, was written as "Yo."
22. George Bird Grinnell [Yo, pseud.] "The Rock Climbers: Part 1, By St. Mary's Lakes," *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1887.
23. For Monroe's *F&S* articles, see J. B. Monroe, "Montana's Buffalo: The Pablo-Allard Heard," *Forest and Stream*, July 12, 1902; "Where Chief Mountain Towers," *Forest and Stream*, March 12, 1910; "The Crime of Modern Range," *Forest and Stream*, May 27, 1911.
24. George Bird Grinnell diary, October 28, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection. This volume covers October 1 to November 11, 1887. A second volume (MS.5 Item 2), covers November 12 to November 21, 1887.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Beacom, an 1882 graduate of Oberlin College, rose to the rank of colonel and remained in the army for the rest of his life. In addition to posts in the American West, he served in locations ranging from Cuba and Mexico to the Philippines. Probably as a result of his relationship with Grinnell, the Forest and Stream Publishing Company published a book he authored in 1894; see John H. Beacom, *How the Buffalo Lost His Crown* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1894). Beacom died while in still in the army in 1916. For biographical information on Beacom, see the Oberlin College Archives website at, <http://www.oberlin.edu/archive/holdings/finding/RG30/SG82/biography.html>.
27. Grinnell always referenced four lakes downstream of Swiftcurrent Lake, but some early maps show only three. Grinnell's first published map of the region (*Forest and Stream*, May 24, 1888), however, shows four.
28. The two glaciers Grinnell saw in 1885, and described on September 14, are today's Swiftcurrent and Grinnell glaciers. To see both at the same time, he was probably standing on the southern slope of Altyn Peak, looking up both valleys with Grinnell to the south and Swiftcurrent to the north.
29. George Bird Grinnell diary, October 31, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection. The photograph Beacom took is housed in the collection of the Glacier National Park Archives, in West Glacier, MT; see Glacier Archives Item GLAC 4383.
30. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 1, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection.
31. George Bird Grinnell [Yo, pseud.] "The Rock Climbers: Part 13, Hunting a Glacier," *Forest and Stream*, March 22, 1888.
32. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 1, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection.
33. M. W. Beacom to Grinnell, April 30, 1917, Grinnell Papers, reel 42, frame 570. In part, the letter reads,
- My brother, Colonel John H. Beacom, U.S. Army, who died in Mexico last September, kept a diary for many years, and under date of October-November, 1887, I find the following entry —
- "I had the good fortune to fall in with Mr. Grinnell, Natural History Editor of *Forest and Stream*, and I enjoyed his hospitality and society for three days. I accompanied him up Swift Current and we photographed the glacier at the head of that Stream, which in honor of him I called Grinnell Glacier."
- For his part, Schultz often took credit for the naming of the glacier and mountain; see James Willard Schultz, *Signposts of Adventure: Glacier National Park as the Indian Knows It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), 137-139; James Willard Schultz, "More Mountain Trails," in *Blackfeet and Buffalo: Memories of Life among the Indians*, ed. Keith C. Seele (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 94.
- Grinnell never claimed to have named any of the features after himself. In Madison Grant's history of the park, written with input from Grinnell, Grant states that Beacom named both the mountain and lake; see Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park Montana*, 6.
- The trip diary and the letter from Beacom's brother suggest that it was Beacom who named the glacier. From there, it was natural to name the other features after Grinnell. No doubt, the naming of each owes gratitude to Beacom, Schultz, and Grinnell. All were there and all apparently agreed to the names, regardless of who spoke first. In 1915, Schultz started a campaign to return many of the park's named features back to their American Indian names. Although sympathetic to the cause, Grinnell was less than enthusiastic and most English names remain to this day, including those in the Swiftcurrent Valley; see Diettert, *Grinnell's Glacier*, 101.
34. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 2, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 2, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection.
42. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 5, 1887, MS.5 Item 306, Grinnell Collection.
43. George Bird Grinnell diary, November 20, 1887, MS.5 Item 2, Grinnell Collection.
44. George Bird Grinnell [Yo, pseud.] "The Rock Climbers," *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1887 to April 5, 1888; April 19, 1888 to May 3, 1888.
45. George Huntington Gould [Dulog, H. G., pseud.] "The Rock Climbers: Part.2, Two Days at Dunmore," *Forest and Stream*, January 5, 1888; "The Rock Climbers: Part. 6, Cliff Dwellers," *Forest and Stream*, February 2, 1888; "The Rock Climbers, Part. 11, The Retreat," *Forest and Stream*, March 8, 1888. The "Cliff Dwellers" publication takes the form of a poem.
46. Only weeks after returning to New York City, Grinnell and other Eastern sportsmen were invited to a December evening dinner at the house of their friend Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt proposed that the group form an organization whose goals would be

- 1) To promote manly sport with the rifle. 2) To promote travel and exploration in the wild and unknown, or but partially known, portions of the country. 3) To work for the preservation of the large game of this country, and so far as possible to further legislation for that purpose, and to assist in enforcing the existing laws. 4) To promote inquiry into and to record observations on the habits and natural history of the various wild animals. 5) To bring about among the members interchange of opinion and ideas on hunting, travel and exploration; on the various kinds of hunting rifles; on the haunts of game animals, etc.
- George Bird Grinnell, ed., *Brief History of the Boone and Crockett Club* (New York, 1910), 4-5. Also, see Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 147-174, and Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 201-216.
47. For Grinnell's first book, see George Bird Grinnell, *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-tales: With Notes on the Origin, Customs and Character of the Pawnee People* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1889). His boys' adventure stories (seven books in the "Jack Series") were published between 1899 and 1913. The most complete published bibliography is Thomas R. Wessel, "George Bird Grinnell" in *Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. John R. Wudner (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 279-294. Grinnell compiled his own, more complete, bibliography that can be found in the Grinnell Papers, reel 45, frames 383-543.
48. Vaughan, "Broad Are Nebraska's Rolling Plains," 43.
49. For an discussion of Grinnell's relationship with, and interest in, Native Americans, see Sherry L. Smith, "George Bird Grinnell and the Vanishing Plains Indians," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 50 (Autumn 2000): 18-31. Also, see Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans Through Anglo Eyes*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a more policy-oriented look at Grinnell's views, see William T. Hagan, *Theodore Roosevelt and Six Friends of the Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). For an example from Grinnell's own pen, see his two 1899 articles in *Atlantic Monthly*: George Bird Grinnell, "The Wild Indian," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1899, 20-29; "The Indian on the Reservation," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1899, 255-267.
50. See, Mark David Spence, "Crown of the Continent, Backbone of the World: The American Wilderness Ideal and Blackfoot Exclusion from Glacier National Park," *Environmental History*, 1 (July 1996), 29-49. Also, see Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Also, see Smith, "George Bird Grinnell and the Vanishing Plains Indians."
51. George Bird Grinnell, "The Crown of the Continent," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, September 1901, 660-672. Grinnell sold the article to the *Century* almost ten years before its publication, but for unknown reasons the magazine had not published it. When *Century* decided to publish it, they sent Grinnell a final proof while he was out of town. As a result, he failed to see the article before publication. Given the odd history of the article's publication, it is even more surprising that the article proved to be one of Grinnell's most influential pieces.
52. In addition to the park histories cited earlier, Grinnell wrote several short histories of his own; see George Bird Grinnell, "The King of Mountains: And How It Beckoned Explorers to the Country That Is Now Glacier National Park." *American Forests and Forest Life*, August 1929, 489-493; "Glacier Park", n.d., Grinnell Papers, reel 42, frames 796-804. To read the actual Congressional act that created the park, see *An Act to Establish "The Glacier National Park" in the Rocky Mountains South of the International Boundary Line, in the State of Montana, and for other Purposes*, Public Law 61-171, 36 Stat. 354 (1910).
53. George Bird Grinnell diary, July 13, 1926, MS.5 Item 358, Grinnell Collection. The trip up the glacier was covered by newspapers as far away as Los Angeles; see *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1926, 24. Park naturalist, Morton J. Elrod, who accompanied Grinnell up to the glacier, wrote about the trip in his 1926 annual report, see "Report of the Park Naturalist, Glacier National Park, 1926," Grinnell Papers, reel 42, Frame 659-691.
54. George Bird Grinnell diary, July 13, 1926, MS.5 Item 358, Grinnell Collection.
55. Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park Montana*, 10.
56. Grinnell to Geo. H. Gould, December 23, 1888, Grinnell Papers, Reel 1, Frame 275.
57. See, George Bird Grinnell, "Some Autumn Birds of the St. Mary's Lake Region," May 24, 1888 to May 31, 1888. Grinnell corresponded with S. C. Robertson about the map, while Robertson was still stationed at Ft. Assiniboine, in February of 1888; see Grinnell Papers, Grinnell to S. C. Robertson, February 4, 1888, Grinnell Papers, reel 1, frames 300-301; Grinnell to S. C. Robertson, February 29, 1888, Grinnell Papers, reel 1, frame 321. In Madison Grant's 1919 history of the park, he refers to a trip made by Lieutenant S. R. Robertson in 1885, see Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park Montana*, 10. Park naturalist and writer Donald Robinson seems to have accepted the initials Grant used, but moves the trip to 1886, see Donald H. Robinson, "The Glacier Moves Tortuously," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 7 (July 1957): 17; Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park: An Administrative History*, 17. U.S. Army records mention numerous excursions lead by "Lieut. Robertson" from Fort Assiniboine, but none match the description given by Grinnell in his 1888 article. Regardless, neither Robertson's original map, nor the account of the reconnaissance has been identified.
58. Both maps are titled *Sketch Map of the St. Mary's Lakes Region*, with different inclusive dates. See, Items GLAC 4404 and GLAC 4405, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT. Another map, Item GLAC 4406, appears to be an early government printed topographical map with Grinnell's handwriting along the margins adding/correcting feature names.
59. Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park Montana*, 6. In the footnote, Madison refers to Lake McDermott, the name given to the lake before it became Swiftcurrent Lake. A slightly different version of the history, without the footnote, was published as a chapter in one of the books of the Boone and Crockett Club in 1925; see, Madison Grant, "The Beginnings of Glacier National Park," in *Hunting and Conservation*, Book of the Boone and Crockett Club, ed. George Bird Grinnell and Charles Sheldon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 446-470.

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