

## Wind River Holiday

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WE had discovered a new game, guessing where the road would go next. It could be seen only about a hundred yards ahead. It really should have been called an automobile trail instead of a road. Fortunately the station wagon was built high, and with good management only occasionally did its bottom scrape a half-buried boulder. The country was hilly, with little hummocks, and larger hills, and the road wound aimlessly about, following no definite direction or topography. We guessed various valleys in succession, and each time the trail turned another way. We were in a Wyoming desert on the Indian Reservation S. of Dubois. Clumps of sagebrush peppered the hillocks, and no living thing was in sight. We had been told that Hidden Valley Ranch could not be seen from the highway. I was beginning to wonder whether it could be seen from anywhere.

Ten miles later someone pointed out horsemen ascending a ridge ahead of us, indifferent to our approach. We had reached an altitude of 7000 ft. Surmounting the next hill we saw the foot of a hitherto unseen valley, divided at the bottom by an irregular column of green trees. On the near side of the trees several low buildings and a fence could be seen. Perhaps this was Hidden Valley Ranch.

A cowboy in bright dress clothes gave us a friendly greeting, and showed us to the ranchhouse. Mrs. Presgrove left the kitchen to welcome us. A pair of marmots in a wire pen along the side of the porch gnawed noisily at a short log. A big cat ran between Charlie's legs. A dog rushed belligerently forward, but quietly subsided when Dorothy made a friendly gesture. On the lawn a lamb ba-aa-ed as a goose squawked past him. A fair-haired four-year-old girl dashed onto the porch, but quickly retired behind her mother's skirt. A horse whinnied, and the thud of rushing hoofs passed outside.

Mrs. Presgrove agreed to furnish pack and saddle horses for the trip to the upper fork of the Dinwoody, near the foot of Dinwoody Glacier. It was 22 miles away, and being already mid-afternoon, with no water en route, we would start early on the

morrow so as to make the trip in one day. The ranch could supply us with butter, and we had enough dry food for a six-day trip. Presently a fast rider came down the valley on a beautiful Palomino. Lean and wiry, the rider dismounted at the corral, and, with a friendly smile, whipped off saddle and bridle. He proved to be Don Presgrove, owner of the ranch.

After sorting and packing our duffel for the trip, we rode 2 miles up Dry Creek Valley to the falls, almost hidden in a narrow cave-like gorge. Miles beyond, above the head of the valley, Chimney Rock stood up above the ridge like a thumb, sharply silhouetted against the sunset sky. There was time before supper for a cool dip in the glacier-fed creek, in a pool hidden by the trees. The sunset indicated fair weather ahead. Henry Coulter and Charles Webb slept in the station wagon, while my wife and I took an unfurnished cabin for the night.

Breakfast consisted mainly of sourdough pancakes and milk. Our horses were packed and saddled by seven, and we were off. The trail climbed rapidly up the ridge on the N. side of the valley to a desert plateau. A pretty stream slanted down the ridge on the far side of the valley, broken by a waterfall. After several miles we reached the waterhole where several cowhands were "cutting out" cattle. Some of our party joined in the fun. A wild herd of horses was driven down from the ridge, and along the trail ahead of us into woods, to a meadow. As the forest thinned out rocky summits appeared on the ridge above and ahead of us. The long high ridge on the opposite side of Dry Creek Valley was broken by a narrow canyon with precipitous walls. As we climbed, our ridge flattened and became bare and rocky. The sounds of sheep on the march floated over to us, and hundreds of them could be seen across the flat, appearing to flow ahead of the herder and his dog. Gradually we reached the top of Scenic Pass, at 10,000 ft. on Horse Ridge. The splendid panorama of the highest and wildest of the Wind River Mountains lay ahead of us, crowned by Gannett at the head of Dinwoody Canyon. This was to me one of the most impressive scenes in our great West.

After lunching at the pass we descended the right flank of Horse Ridge to timber, and the Ink Wells, three small dark lakes on a shelf of Dinwoody Canyon. There was a fishing camp at one of the lakes, but when the Federal Government wisely designated this a wilderness area, all the cabins had to be replaced with tents.

Descending further, we came to the switchbacks, and face upon the upper canyon. The E. face of Gannett appeared almost vertical, half hidden by snow and ice. There appeared to be no way up this face, but we were to learn how deceiving such an impression can be. Dinwoody Creek was high and turbid with melted snow. The creek was forded on horseback, and we rode on with legs wet.

Floyd Wilson welcomed us at his camp, and we decided to stop there for the night. The mosquitoes and horse flies were not too bad—but bad enough. After supper we discussed plans for the morrow. I had climbed in the Wind Rivers from Titcomb Lakes region four years previously with the Appalachian Club. Coulter and Webb had not previously visited the mountains, nor had any glacier experience. Gannett and Theodore Koven were both clearly visible from camp, and equally appealing. Floyd told us that Gannett might have been climbed once from the N., and that Koven, a much smaller peak, was credited with one ascent. We agreed to ascend Gannett Glacier and inspect both.

As we arose the moon was setting over Koven, and soon the first red glow of sunrise bathed its summit. Following Dinwoody Creek to the fork, we forded the S. branch and crossed a shoulder of Sentinel Peak to the snout of Gannett Glacier. Webb discovered the snout to be much steeper than it looked. He stepped cautiously onto the ice with an expression of awe. He soon became alarmed at the rumblings of subglacial streams, and at the cracks in the ice. His look of amazement at the first large crevasse was a delight. The vision of this crevasse must have recurred to him when we reached the snow, for only the rope, and following in my footsteps, reassured him. Skirting the larger crevasses, we reached the col between the two peaks without difficulty and again studied various possible routes. Koven appeared to be a straight rock climb, and we were looking for snow and ice. The N. ridge of Gannett was separated from the glacier by a large randkluft and the wall above the cleft was ice—polished and quite steep. The snow slope leading up to a col between the N. ridge and the summit was less inclined than it had first appeared, but there were two large bergschrunds. The lower was a continuation of the randkluft from the N. ridge. Fifty feet above it, from the N. E. face of the summit peak a second bergschrund overlapped the first. It appeared that we might be able to angle up between them. Charlie's remarks as we swung around the first bergschrund were

stimulating but not encouraging. The crack yawned beneath us as we slowly worked our way upward, while the wall above seemed to overhang us. Hank climbed quietly, but Charlie was plainly worried.

Reaching the rock of the N. ridge we stopped for lunch. The saddle was reached by way of the loose rock along the N. edge of the snow couloir. We could look down the great cliffs of the W. face to the glacier. Climbing directly up the rocks of the N. ridge we soon reached the summit. The air was clear with a visibility of a hundred miles. The Tetons stood out clearly on the N. W. horizon, with the Gros Ventre Mountains nearer at hand. Sprawling Downs Mountain lay to the N., and Mammoth Glacier spread out far below us. We were standing on the highest point of the Continental Divide in Wyoming with a watershed to an ocean on either hand.

After a second lunch we decided to traverse the mountain, and walked down the S. ridge to its junction with the S. E. ridge and the regular route. We continued on the S. ridge to the large tower, below which lies the col connecting Gannett with Pinnacle Ridge. Ken Henderson had led our 1936 party up a couloir of this tower. I missed the couloir, so we descended the tower by a spiral route around the W. and S. to a long chimney on its E. face leading eventually down to the col. The descent of this tower was the most interesting part of the day's climb. The route of ascent seemed to be the best route up the mountain provided the snow couloir and bergschrunds are in good condition. The first 100 ft. below the col was iced and awkward, and the scree frozen and sharp, but we soon reached Dinwoody Glacier, which we descended and crossed to its opposite lateral moraine. An easy walk along the right bank of Dinwoody Creek brought us back to camp.

During this descent the peaks in the great cirque around Dinwoody Glacier had been inspected, and Woodrow Wilson was chosen as our next goal. On the next afternoon we moved camp about a mile up the S. fork to timberline at 10,500 ft. Early the following morning we walked up to the glacier. Here Charlie developed mountain sickness and turned back. Hank and I took the Woodrow Wilson prong of Dinwoody Glacier, skirting the larger crevasses, and crossing others on the snow. The bergschrund was snow-covered near its middle, which we crossed. Snow extended well up toward the summit of Wilson on this the

N. side. At the saddle where the snow ended, we suddenly faced the Sphinx, seemingly almost within reach. The huge overhanging bergschrund crossing its N. face was most impressive. We were surprised to find a sharp notch in the ridge above the snow, and upon reaching its bottom, we turned the opposing wall to the right and ascended the couloir to the summit. Here we found the records of three previous ascents. Heading the Titcomb Valley cirque, with Helen and Frémont on the E., G-15 and the Titcomb Needles on the W., and Gannett to the N., the view from Wilson is one of the finest in the region. After a pleasant hour on the summit we climbed back to the snow, and glissaded down the snow-covered part of the glacier. As we walked over the glacier and along the S. fork, large, loose clouds began to form along the summits, and there was a beautiful play of light from the late afternoon sun in the clouds. The warm red glow of the sunset on several peaks was visible from camp. Webb was in much better spirits, and ready to climb again on the morrow.

Our next choice lay between the Sphinx and Turret. We had with us no record of previous ascents, and most of the peaks were not designated on the topographic maps, so we chose on the basis of our observations in the field. We were not even sure of the names of the mountains. Floyd thought the Sphinx had been climbed once, with difficulty. It was very close to Wilson, lower, with less extensive views and opportunity for photography; the high twin towers of Turret, with a vertical wall on the N. tower, suggested the possibility of an interesting rock climb. So Turret it would be.

Again, clear weather, and an easy walk on the open glacier to the foot of the scree couloir on the N. ridge of Turret. The scree was loose so we traversed to the buttress on its right, where we found an easy continuous rock climb to the saddle, from which there was an interesting view of the Bull Lake Creek Canyon. Traversing to the E. some 200 ft., we entered a steep chimney leading up to a notch between a small subsidiary peak, and the N. tower. The N. face of this tower appeared difficult. At the notch, the remainder of the route was clear. A broad couloir, extending up the W. face of the mountains, divided the two towers. Traversing diagonally upward under the N. tower, the couloir was reached, and through it the higher S. tower. Hank and Charlie, in search of rock climbing, and accustomed to New England

granite, were disappointed at the broken loose rock, requiring constant vigilance, and the lack of continuous technical difficulty. The summit was about 6 ft. in diameter, with views in every direction. We found a tiny can, with the names of Effingham and Blaurock, 1926, and the legend, "Climbed by mistake for Harding Peak; going down now to climb Harding." I have since learned that the peak was subsequently traversed by Underhill and Henderson. There was a fine view of the precipitous E. face of Frémont with its huge underlying snowfield broken by a long bergschrund, of Sacagawca, and the long E. ridge of Helen ending at the summit tower. I have seen no better view of Gannett, with the three great prongs of Dinwoody Glacier. Far to the E. arose in billows the dense smoke of a forest fire, while 2 miles away Chimney Rock stood out above the rim of Horse Ridge.

Returning by the same route to the col, the scree proved too coarse and sharp for glissading, and too loose for comfort. This was the most disagreeable scree I have ever encountered, and I soon wished we had climbed back down the ridge. Just below the foot of the glacier is a clear, quiet pool with a big snow bank at one end, and Charlie and I could not resist a swim.

At camp there was just enough food left for the next two meals, and as this region was free of insects, we stopped again for the night. There was no one at Floyd's camp the next morning, but we expected Don with the horses in the afternoon. They arrived in due time, with a new food supply, with which we feasted that night. I wanted to see Chimney Rock and walk out along Horse Ridge to Scenic Pass. Next morning the others rode down the trail, planning to fish at the Inkwells, while I climbed up to Horse Ridge by the couloir back of Floyd's camp. Again there were fine views, far and near. I followed the rim of Dinwoody Canyon to the unnamed lake in the glacial basin at the head of Horse Ridge, then circled the glacier to the summit of the ridge at 13,400 ft. Chimney Rock was now in view to the E., a vertical column connected to the ridge by a knife-edge. Storm clouds were appearing toward the W.

Chimney Rock was most tempting. The vertical column appeared to be at least 1000 ft. high, standing off 100 ft. from Horse Ridge, and 60 ft. above it. The effect was accentuated by a deep couloir on either side of the ridge. The top ridge of the chimney was flat and polished smooth, and sloped steeply toward the main

ridge. It was split down the middle by an irregular crack about 6 ft. wide. A narrow jagged knife-edge of some 10 yds. long connected the Rock with the main ridge. I could see no evidence that the Rock had been climbed. No rock-climber could pass up such a temptation easily. But alone, with no rope, no light shoes, and a strong, gusty wind coming from the storm in the W., the temptation had be resisted.

The walk to Scenic Pass was a long one, but along the skyline, and the continually changing panorama, with the approaching storm, caused one to forget to be tired. The wind increased, and soon a driving mixture of rain, sleet, and snow was blown across the ridge. The storm was at its height as I crossed the summit above the pass. In the basin below a huge mass of sheep, running ahead of the storm, suddenly swung sharply to the left for no apparent reason, and raced up the gentle slope. The sheep herder's tent was warm and dry, and smelled of fresh mutton. Floyd was there, and he told me that my party had just gone over the pass to seek shelter from the storm. The main range of the mountains was now completely hidden in the boiling clouds, and on the opposite side of Dinwoody Canyon scud clouds blew in and out of gullies and couloirs, and swirled around the various peaks, breaking and reforming, while rain poured into the canyon.

I had hoped to find the horses over the pass, as the storm had not crossed it, but they had gone on. I had walked 15 miles, and the ranch was still a dozen miles away. Dry Creek Canyon now came into view, clear and quiet in contrast with Dinwoody. As I reached the open forest, the alpenglow began to light up the trees, and the play of soft lights and shadows, and color, was beautiful. But it would soon be dark. There was light as far as the water hole. I thought of bivouacking there, but decided to go on. It seemed simpler and safer to drop down into the canyon and follow the stream. A small herd of cattle in one of the many gullies eyed me suspiciously, then wheeled and dashed heavily away. Before I reached the stream the night was black, and it was difficult to distinguish sage from prickles and cactus—soon enough. The ground was rough, but not to be compared with a boulder slope after dark. The trees along the creek were dense in places, and it was necessary to climb out into the desert again. A vague horse trail was helpful when it could be found. Soon a light, which must come from the ranch, appeared, possibly a hundred yards,

possibly a mile away. Only one more obstacle, the irrigation ditches, well hidden in grain waist high. For one long moment I became the obstacle—wet to the thighs.

Charlie and Hank returned to the Tetons next day. My wife and I spent three days on horseback exploring “sinks,” Indian burial-grounds and the homes of vanished tribes, lower Dinwoody Canyon with its Indian writings, and its huge Indian cave carved first by the stream as a natural aqueduct. Sonny, aged nine, led us to a hawk’s nest in a hollow tree, killed a rattler in the desert, and showed us what it means to be brought up in the saddle. At sunset every hillock of the Wind River Valley and every distant range stood out clearly in the eerie light. And so ended our Wind River excursion.