



National park gateway land use evolution : a case study of Glacier National Park, 1890-2001
by Lisa Marie Baracz Lamoreux

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Earth Sciences

Montana State University

© Copyright by Lisa Marie Baracz Lamoreux (2002)

Abstract:

This study of national park gateway communities focuses on the Glacier National Park setting. It examines the evolution of landscape changes in Glacier's gateway communities as they were created by various public and private institutions. The study also investigates the gateway communities through changing patterns of land use and landscape because cultural and historical geographers agree that such changes can tell a great deal about a locality's changing cultural values and economic base.

Multiple objectives were addressed by the study. The first objective was to reconstruct the evolution of the past land use in the gateway communities of West Glacier and East Glacier. The key years of reconstruction were 1910 (the establishment of the park), 1930 (the rise of automobile tourism), 1960 (the post war era) and 2000 (the present day community). The second objective was to reconstruct how the cultural landscapes of these communities changed and how those landscape features contributed to distinctive place images. The third objective was to identify the key issues that face gateway communities as they enter the twenty-first century. The final objective was to use the Glacier case study to develop a regional and local model of national park gateway community development and evolution.

The results of the study will be useful in future land planning and development of national park gateway communities. The impact of technology has been a significant part of the evolution of the gateway landscape. Therefore, the regional and local evolution models will be an asset to gateway community evolution.

NATIONAL PARK GATEWAY LAND USE EVOLUTION:
A CASE STUDY OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
1890-2001

by

Lisa Marie Baracz Lamoreux

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Science

in

Earth Sciences

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

February 2002

COPYRIGHT

by

Lisa Marie Baracz Lamoreux

2002

All Rights Reserved

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Lisa Marie Baracz Lamoreux

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

William Wyckoff

William Wyckoff
(Signature)

2/5/03
(Date)

Approved for the Department of Earth Sciences

Dave Lageson

Dave Lageson
(Signature)

2/6/03
(Date)

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Bruce McLeod

Bruce R. McLeod
(Signature)

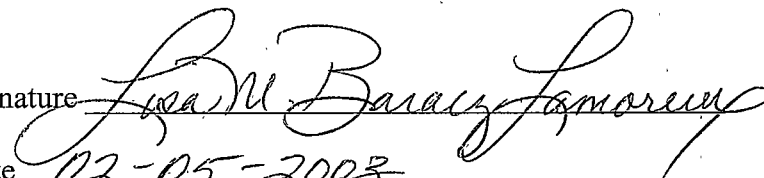
2-21-03
(Date)

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University-Bozeman, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under the rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed by the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in parts may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Signature



Date

02-05-2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee- Dr. William Wyckoff (Committee Chair), Dr. Joseph Ashley, and Dr. Jianyi Liu for their advise, assistance and continuing support. I would also like to thank Deirdre Shaw, the curator of the Glacier National Park Archives and the Montana Historical Society for all their time and effort helping me find the needle in the haystack photograph or document. A special thank you to Shannon and Kevin Podruzny, and my cousins Michelle and Kenny Huff, for their special hospitality when I stayed in Bozeman for weeks on end, and Rebecca and Kevin Frey, for giving my horses a safe and secure home when I was in town. I particularly want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family and friends for sticking with me through the creation and completion of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. THE GATEWAY SETTING	1
Introduction.....	1
Objectives.....	4
Sources and Methods.....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	7
2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE GATEWAY LANDSCAPE, 1890-1910...	14
Pre-park Landscape.....	14
Establishment of the Western Gateway.....	18
Land Use Patterns of Belton in 1910.....	19
Landscape Change in Pre-Park Belton.....	21
Perceptions of Pre-Park Belton.....	25
Establishment of the Eastern Gateway.....	28
Land Use Patterns of Midvale in 1910.....	29
Landscape Change in Pre-Park Midvale.....	33
Perceptions of Pre-Park Midvale.....	37
3. GATEWAY EVOLUTION, 1910-1930.....	43
Early Park Development.....	43
Growth of the Western Gateway.....	49
Land Use Patterns of Belton in 1930.....	50
Landscape Change in Early Belton.....	54
Perceptions of Early Belton.....	57
Growth of the Eastern Gateway.....	62
Land Use Patterns of Glacier Park in 1930.....	63
Landscape Change in Early Glacier Park.....	71
Perceptions of Early Glacier Park.....	77
4. THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY, 1930-1960.....	90
The Emergence of Political Infrastructure.....	90
The Shifting Landscape of the Western Gateway.....	95
Land Use Patterns of West Glacier in 1960.....	96
Landscape Change in West Glacier.....	103

Perceptions of West Glacier.....	109
The Shifting Landscape of the Eastern Gateway.....	117
Land Use Patterns in East Glacier.....	117
Landscape Change in East Glacier.....	121
Perceptions of East Glacier.....	127
5. PRESERVATION AND THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY, 1960-2001.....	137
A Growing Environmental Consciousness.....	137
The Western Gateway.....	142
Land Use.....	143
Landscape Change.....	150
Perceptions of the West Side Gateway.....	153
The Eastern Gateway.....	160
Land Use Patterns in East Glacier.....	160
Landscape Change in East Glacier.....	166
Perceptions of the East Side Gateway Community.....	172
6. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY...	178
Gateway Planning Issues.....	178
Glacier's Gateway Setting.....	182
Regional Gateway Evolution and Development Model.....	186
Local Gateway Land Use Development Model.....	189
REFERENCES	192
APPENDIX A: Glacier National Park Visitation.....	203

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Regional location map.....	2
2. West Glacier Aerial View.....	3
3. East Glacier Highway 2 Corridor.....	3
4. Local Scale Map of Glacier National Park.....	15
5. Land use reconstruction map- Belton 1910.....	20
6. The First Middle Fork of the Flathead River Bridge.....	23
7. Belton During its Heyday.....	23
8. Belton Post Office.....	24
9. Belton Chalet in 1910.....	24
10. Eastbound View of the Great Northern Railway.....	27
11. The Original plat map for Midvale in 1907.....	31
12. Land use reconstruction map- Midvale 1910.....	32
13. The Dawson 4/X Ranch Site.....	33
14. Original Road Connecting the Clarke and Dawson Townsites..	34
15. Wagon Road Westbound.....	34
16. Glacier Park Trading Company.....	36
17. Blackfeet Celebration.....	42
18. The Great Northern Railway Sponsored Glidden Tour in 1913...	46
19. Land use reconstruction map- Belton 1930.....	51
20. Belton Masonic Hall.....	53

21. New Middle Fork River Bridge and Local Homes.....	53
22. Original Glacier Park entrance road.....	55
23. Park headquarters (formerly George Snyder's Hotel).....	56
24. The Belton Chalet Gardens.....	58
25. The New Park Administration Building in 1924.....	60
26. Land use reconstruction map- Glacier Park 1930.....	64
27. Midvale Tent Camps.....	65
28. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1928—Clarke Townsite.....	66
29. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1928—Dawson Townsite.....	69
30. Glacier Park Hotel—1912	73
31. Great Northern Promotional Literature.....	75
32. Glacier Park Hotel and Touring Cars.....	76
33. Early Travel Guidebooks.....	78
34. Glacier Park Hotel Construction.....	79
35. Glacier Park Hotel.....	81
36. Blackfeet at the Glacier Park Depot.....	81
37. The Cultural Décor of the Glacier Park Hotel.....	82
38. Blackfeet Camp on East Side.....	84
39. Glacier Park Hotel Blackfeet Tepee Encampment.....	84
40. Winold Reiss Painting.....	86
41. Blackfeet Indian.....	86
42. Glacier Park loading docks	88

43. Land use reconstruction map- West Glacier 1960.....	97
44. West Glacier Motel	98
45. Old Belton Homes.....	101
46. West Glacier Elementary School.....	101
47. Aerial View of Belton in 1929.....	104
48. U.S. Highway 2.....	106
49. New Underpass 1939.....	106
50. West Glacier Entrance Station.....	107
51. Belton mercantile buildings—1938	108
52. Moving the Apgar general store	108
53. Automobile Travel Guides.....	114
54. Land use reconstruction map- East Glacier 1960.....	118
55. Glacier Park Grade School.....	120
56. The Villager Cafeteria and Dining Room.....	124
57. The Sherburne Mountain Pine Motel.....	126
58. Blackfeet dancing with Glacier Park guests.....	127
59. Blackfeet Indians Greeting Great Northern Passengers.....	129
60. Glacier Climbing Guide.....	130
61. Travel USA Article.....	135
62. New Administration Building.....	139
63. Land use reconstruction map- West Glacier 2000.....	144
64. The Tamarack Lodge.....	145

65. Glacier Highland Motel.....	147
66. River Bend.....	147
67. West Glacier Corridor Comparison.....	151
68. Alberta Visitor Center.....	152
69. West Glacier Post Office.....	153
70. Belton Chalet.....	154
71. The Site of Belton.....	155
72. Belton Post Office.....	156
73. Land use reconstruction map- East Glacier 2000.....	162
74. Low Income Housing.....	163
75. East Glacier Post Office.....	164
76. New Summer Home.....	165
77. Glacier Park Hotel Entrance.....	166
78. Glacier Park Trading Company.....	168
79. Brown House Pottery.....	169
80. Brownie's.....	170
81. Serrano's Restaurant.....	171
82. Glacier Park Hotel.....	173
83. Montana Highway Maps.....	177
84. Regional Development Model.....	187
85. Local Land Use Development Model.....	190

ABSTRACT

This study of national park gateway communities focuses on the Glacier National Park setting. It examines the evolution of landscape changes in Glacier's gateway communities as they were created by various public and private institutions. The study also investigates the gateway communities through changing patterns of land use and landscape because cultural and historical geographers agree that such changes can tell a great deal about a locality's changing cultural values and economic base.

Multiple objectives were addressed by the study. The first objective was to reconstruct the evolution of the past land use in the gateway communities of West Glacier and East Glacier. The key years of reconstruction were 1910 (the establishment of the park), 1930 (the rise of automobile tourism), 1960 (the post war era) and 2000 (the present day community). The second objective was to reconstruct how the cultural landscapes of these communities changed and how those landscape features contributed to distinctive place images. The third objective was to identify the key issues that face gateway communities as they enter the twenty-first century. The final objective was to use the Glacier case study to develop a regional and local model of national park gateway community development and evolution.

The results of the study will be useful in future land planning and development of national park gateway communities. The impact of technology has been a significant part of the evolution of the gateway landscape. Therefore, the regional and local evolution models will be an asset to gateway community evolution.

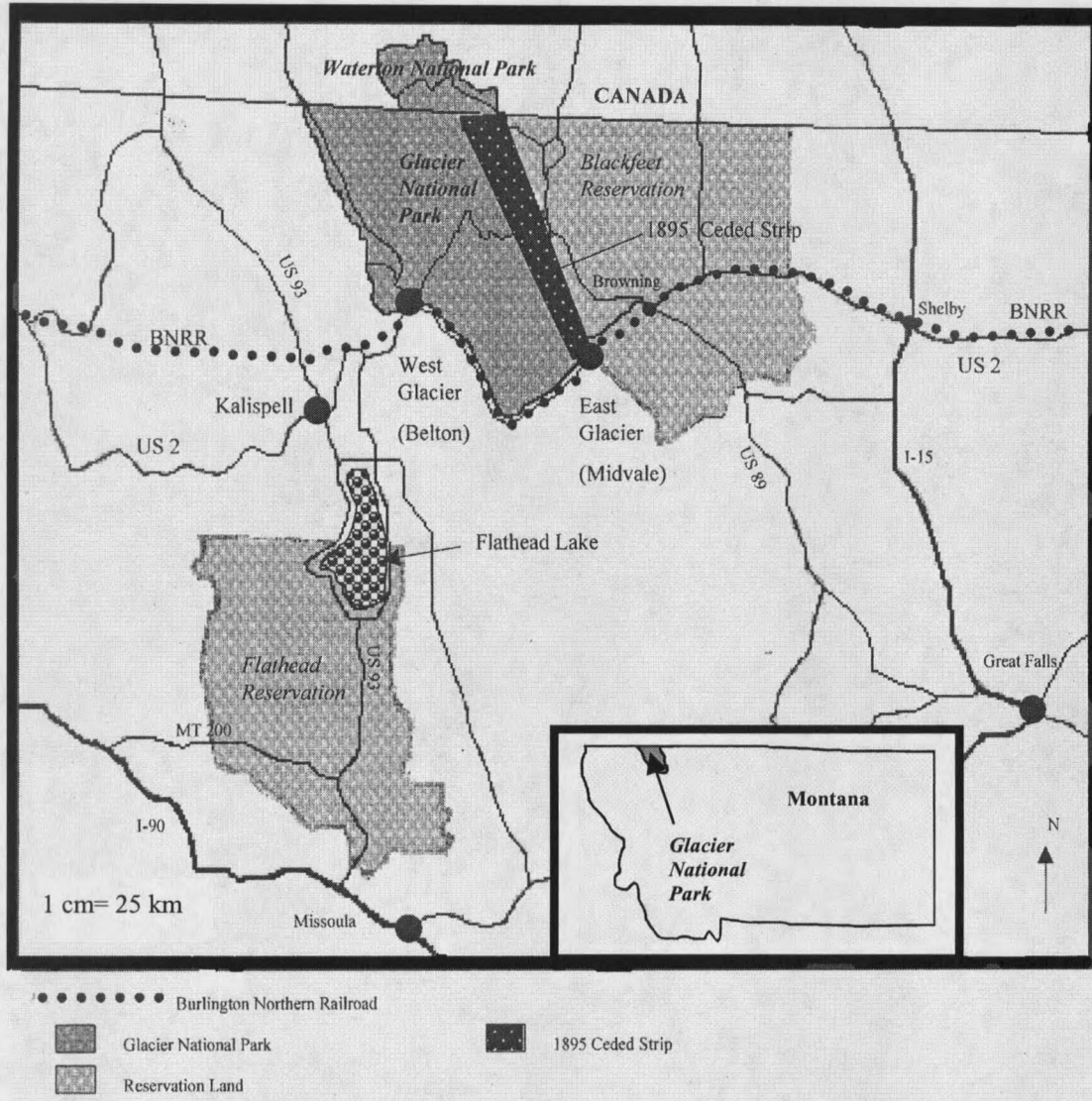
THE GATEWAY SETTING

Introduction

The gateway communities of Montana's Glacier National Park witnessed powerful changes between 1910 and 2000, as tourists began to rely on automobiles rather than the railroad to reach the park, and as evolving park policies conflicted with the interests of gateway residents (Fig. 1). Since the early establishment of East Glacier and West Glacier, land use patterns and landscape appearance were often the centers of conflict and tension between different agencies of government, businesses (including the railroad), and local residents including Native American populations. This study of national park gateways focuses on the Glacier Park setting and examines the evolution of landscape changes in Glacier's gateway communities as various public and private institutions created them. The railroad, the government, the residents and the Native Americans each marketed different images of the Glacier landscape in these gateway centers.

The community of West Glacier is located in the secluded Middle Fork of the Flathead River canyon (Fig. 2). The west-side landscape is rugged country with thick, lush vegetation that surrounds the community. In comparison, East Glacier is located on the boundary of the plains of eastern Montana and the Rocky Mountains (Fig. 3). The community is nestled along the Midvale Creek area with the spectacular mountains of Glacier rising above the town. Gateway land use patterns and landscape evolution help

Figure 1. Regional Location Map



The Northwestern United States and the location of Glacier National Park and its gateway communities. [Montana State Highway Commission 2001-2002]

Figure 2. West Glacier Aerial View



The community of West Glacier is nestled into the Middle Fork River Valley. West Glacier is located near the bottom right of the photograph. [Photographer unknown, Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1930).]

Figure 3. East Glacier U.S. 2 Corridor



The town of East Glacier is located near Midvale Creek and the edge of the Rocky Mountains. [Author photo (2001).]

define the character of the region, the changes in transportation technology and the shifting demands by tourists over time.

Objectives

Multiple objectives were addressed in this thesis. The first objective was to reconstruct the evolution of past land use in Glacier National Park's two gateway communities of West Glacier and East Glacier. The key years that were reconstructed were 1910 (the establishment of the park), 1930 (the rise of automobile tourism and the completion of the Theodore Roosevelt International Highway (later known as U.S. Highway 2 or U.S. 2)), 1960 (the post World War II era and rapid development of concessions), and 2000 (the present day gateway community). Land records, plat maps, photographs and oral histories were used to help in the reconstruction of these areas.

The second objective was to reconstruct how the cultural landscapes of these communities changed and how those landscape features contributed to distinctive place images. Railroad brochures and literature, automobile brochures and literature from state tourism promotions, auto clubs and tours such as the Glidden Tours and the "See America First" campaign, specific literature from West Glacier and East Glacier, photographs of the gateways and other types of correspondence were examined to determine the evolution of place imagery and the changes of the visual landscape over time.

The third objective was to identify the key issues that face gateway communities as they enter the twenty-first century. In the past, a gateway community was the entrance

to a national park, monument, seashore or lakeshore that provided the tourist with amenities. Now, gateway communities represent more, and they face many challenges because of their relative position to some of America's most beautiful parks. People are moving to these communities for a better quality of life. The result has been a multitude of problems such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, land use planning conflicts and development and habitat competition. Some of these concerns are illustrated by land planning and development issues within Glacier's communities. There are various agencies that oversee land planning in these settings. West Glacier land use planning and development is regulated by the Flathead County Planning Department. Development within West Glacier has also been limited because only a few families own the land. However, along U.S. 2 from Hungry Horse to West Glacier, is an area of unregulated development of tourist attractions such as campgrounds, hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, go-cart tracks, funhouses, rafting companies and helicopter rides. The Blackfoot Indian Reservation regulates East Glacier development. Many of the buildings and land use patterns have not changed since 1930.

The final objective was to use the Glacier case study to develop a regional and local model of national park gateway community evolution. The data suggest several evolutionary stages: Phase I- the pre-park setting, Phase II- railroad development and park establishment, Phase III- the rise of the automobile, Phase IV- contemporary evolution. The general model includes examples from West Glacier and East Glacier gateway development. Other national park gateways can be examined, as well, and these can be used to assess the proposed models for Glacier.

Sources and Methods

Many secondary sources on Glacier National Park, tourism in the American West, national park development, the Great Northern Railway, automobile transportation, and imagery in the American West were consulted to provide a strong foundation of resources in nineteenth century and twentieth century western history and culture. These sources are essential in forming the base of this study and understanding the larger picture of American culture from 1890 to 2000.

Additional primary data were gathered from local sources, the Glacier National Park Archives and Library, the Montana State Historical Society (Helena), and Flathead County, Teton County, and Glacier County planning offices and libraries. In addition, The Daily Inter Lake, The Whitefish Pilot and The Hungry Horse News provided important newspaper information. Primary data from the Glacier National Park Archives included ranger reports, superintendent reports, director of national parks correspondence, Blackfeet Indian Agency correspondence, travel reports, and development plans. Other sources such as general correspondence from concessionaires, and letters with local, state and federal agencies, foreign officials, and individuals were useful for reconstructing boundary issues and determining the local issues of the gateway communities. Sources from concessions, advertising and publication data provided information about the railroad, the "See America First" campaign and automobile travel associations. The Montana Historical Society provided travel promotional information from the railroad and automobile travel brochures. County records from Flathead, Teton and Glacier were helpful in searching for land records, plat maps, and Sanborn maps.

The local newspapers provided documentation of events and provided local opinion on the establishment of the park, local and federal controversies, and advertisements from the railroad, local concessions, and automobile travel promotions.

Land use and landscape data were reconstructed for four key years, 1910, 1930, 1960 and 2000, both for West Glacier (Belton) and East Glacier (Midvale). Travel promotion literature, railroad and automobile pamphlets and brochures, and concession information helped reveal the marketing strategies and the visual landscape of the gateway communities. Oral histories, travel correspondence, and community newspapers provided perspectives of visitor experiences, concerns of the gateway residents and park relations with the communities. Photographs, oral histories, travel reports, development reports, Sanborn maps, plat maps and land records were used to aid in the reconstruction of land use in West Glacier and East Glacier.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined the gateway communities through changing patterns of land use and landscape because cultural and historical geographers agree that such changes can tell a great deal about a locality's changing cultural values and economic base. Technological changes were also revealed. For example, in the case of the Glacier gateways, the era of the railroad was signified by the dominance of the East Glacier Hotel and the Belton Chalet. Today, however, the impact of auto tourism is a more significant part of the landscape. The historical landscape and land use patterns can aid in the recreation of the past, but they also can help us understand contemporary issues.

A "gateway" is a strategically positioned entrance into a city or region (Burghardt 1971). Larger gateway cities often are associated with a focused network of transportation lines and the provision of wholesaling services. According to Burghardt's study of gateway cities, gateways develop along the moving frontier of settlement or close to a boundary between areas of differing intensities (Burghardt 1971). The evolution of the gateway city can be affected by improved technology and transportation. In nineteenth century America many gateway cities developed along railroad lines. This spatial structure was redefined by the coming of the automobile, which freed the traveler from the fixed structure of the rail network. National park gateway communities thus evolved as the need for more specialized, service-oriented tourist towns grew.

The national park gateways are specialized, unique communities providing the tourist with services such as food, accommodations, guide service, and souvenirs. Gateway communities are a significant part of their associated park. However, they are also small towns with their own sense of community. Local gateway residents often thought their small towns would remain unaffected by increasing tourism, but many of these communities have changed dramatically due to overcrowding, increased traffic and high property costs. Places such as Gettysburg and Gatlinburg have developed into tourist landscapes of Disneyland proportions. Gettysburg is an example of the confrontation between a nineteenth century battlefield and a twentieth century technology, where the commercial development of the area has reached metropolitan proportions (Patterson 1974). The dilemma that faces many gateways is how to expand and develop without creating an amusement-like visual landscape, since communities

contend with the pressure of development while their associated parks are focused on conservation (Leighton 1985 b).

The evolution of western national park gateways is intimately tied to their associated parks as well as to the nationwide expansion of the railroad and the automobile. Places such as Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Banff would have been inaccessible without the railroad or automobile. William Cornelius Van Horne, president of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, said, "If you can't export the scenery, you have to import the tourists," concerning the development of the community of Banff (Leighton 1985 a, 9). Gateway communities traditionally utilize the scenery, the most profitable resource they have to exploit, to bring settlement and tourism to their towns.

The study of western national park gateways also offers an opportunity to examine larger changes in western tourism (Pomeroy 1957, Shaffer 1994, Rothman 1998). The late nineteenth century railroad companies marketed the western image of cowboys and Indians, incredible scenery and a frontier of wildness that easterners craved. The railroads portrayed the West as a region of mythic characters and a place where ordinary people could do extraordinary things (Wyckoff and Dilsaver 1997). For example, marketing strategies of the Great Northern Railway utilized Fredrick Jackson Turner's idea of savagery meeting civilization. As tourists arrived at East Glacier (Midvale), they were greeted by the savage members of the Blackfoot tribe in the civilized gardens of the grand, Swiss-style, East Glacier Hotel, all set against the background of the alpine-like Rocky Mountains. The west side of Glacier Park portrayed an image of the unconquered frontier. As visitors ended their adventure across the Great

Divide, usually on the west side, they felt they were pioneers of the great American frontier amid the landscapes of Apgar and West Glacier (Belton). The study of place images creates explicit cultural, social, political and economic contexts that help us understand how the West evolved as a distinct American region (Wyckoff and Dilsaver 1997). Each of these two gateway communities can reveal clues about the development of western tourism.

This study addresses several themes within the context of the Glacier Park gateway community settings. First, changes in transportation technology from the railroad to the automobile initiated changes in gateway landscapes, land uses and the experiences tourists had in such localities (Runte 1979, Stilgoe 1983, Fifer 1988). Modes of transportation, because of speed, distance, safety and comfort, had an enormous impact on the perceptions of the observer (Fifer 1988, Hyde 1993). Initial travel to the West in luxury rail cars took the wildness out of the wilderness for the traveler. It also redefined the spatial context of land and time. The railroad provided a fast, safe, and comfortable trip across the wide expanse of the continent (Hyde 1993). The western railroads also played a pivotal role in national park development and promotion by advertising the romantic side of tourism (Runte 1979, Wyckoff and Dilsaver 1997).

The invention of the automobile energized the sense of adventure of the tourist and encouraged more travel to the West (Belasco 1979). The car permitted travelers to be in control of their destination and freed them from the constraint of the timetable and structured network of the railroad. Increased use of the auto transformed the visual landscape with road improvements, motels and garages in these gateway communities

(Jakle 1987,1994, 1996, Witzel 1998). Also, the auto allowed the traveler to seek out other accommodations and services at the larger city centers that were associated with the gateway communities and their park. The invention of the train, auto and plane changed the perceptions and the perspective of tourists as they moved across large expanses of land in a short amount of time.

Second, this study also examines shifting place images in these gateway settings. The West has held many place images of hope, intrigue, romance and wildness for Americans since the Civil War, and many of these images are revealed in the changing cultural landscapes of Glacier's gateway communities. During the nineteenth century, newspapers, journals, and magazines enhanced the scenic, romantic, rustic images of the newly settled West. What distant Americans read and saw determined perceptions of the West and how they interpreted the information (Hyde 1993). The railroad and automobile tourist brochures promoted spectacular places to travel in America (Belasco 1979, Runte 1979). James J. Hill persuaded the American Automobile Association to schedule the Glidden Tour in 1913 along the route of the Great Northern Railway to Glacier National Park and he provided Pullman cars and diners as accommodations for the drivers (Pomeroy 1957). The "See America First" campaign was sponsored to encourage Americans to explore their own nation during World War I.

The healing and economic recovery of our nation after World War II relied on the spiritual rejuvenation of the West. Millions of tourists flocked to the region in search of the romantic West, the untouched wilderness and the solitude of nature. The National Park Service responded with the ambitious Mission 66 program that was dedicated to

modernizing park infrastructure. The architecture and public improvements of the Mission 66 project are still obvious in park visitor centers, campgrounds, lodging, roads and some gateway development. Therefore, as tourism increased, gateway communities became key points of contact between local residents, the tourists and the national park. Over the past decade, East Glacier and West Glacier residents and interest groups have restored many of the buildings that had fallen into disrepair.

Third, this study of gateways explores the changing relationship between park policy/management issues and the economic base and local politics of the gateway communities themselves. There are many stresses and conflicts that can occur between communities and agencies. Examples of conflict among agencies are the eastside boundary disputes and hunting rights conflicts involving the Blackfeet Reservation and the national park. The east side community is located near the park boundary, although unlike West Glacier, it does not have direct connections with park service infrastructure. However, the community is still directly affected, economically and politically, by Glacier National Park as well as by the Blackfeet Reservation. National park policy influences more issues on the west side of the park because of its close proximity to West Glacier and United States Forest Service lands. Also, the main headquarters for Glacier is now on the west side of the park and are close to the gateway. Therefore, many park employees live in the gateway community in addition to living in nearby government housing. Land use developments in West Glacier are monitored closely, not only by its local government but also by the park. Debates over land holdings and government policy are issues that are of concern to the residents of West Glacier. The most recent

park-related economic issue facing both gateway communities is the anticipated repairing of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The problem that has to be examined is the impact on tourism in the gateway communities when the road is closed for repairs. Once again, the issue highlights the intimate ties which bind gateway communities to their nearby national parks.

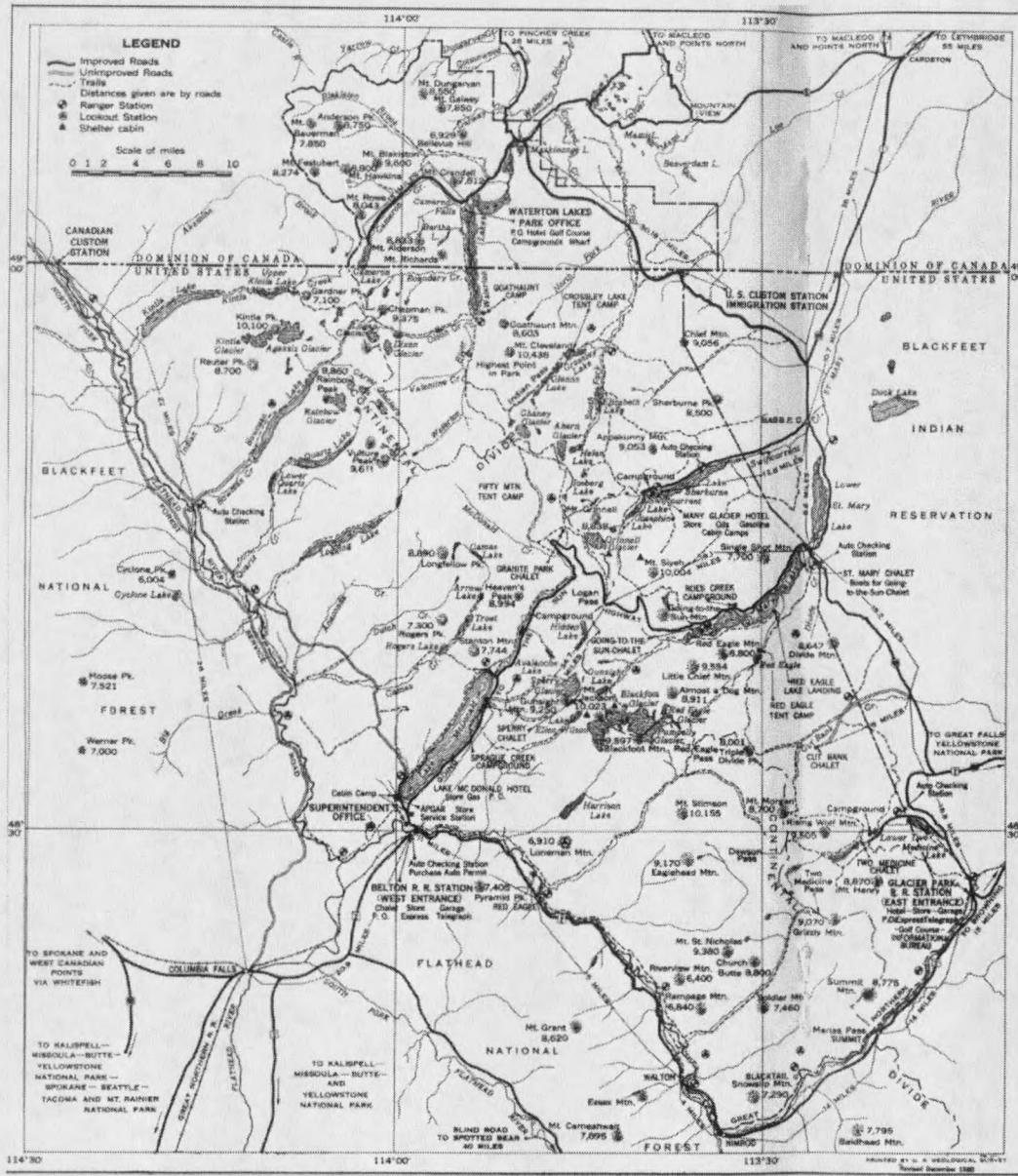
THE EMERGENCE OF THE GATEWAY LANDSCAPE, 1890-1910

Landscape changes in the Glacier area accelerated between 1890 and 1910. Before the park was created in 1910, railroad settlement, mining and early tourist resorts and camps shaped the incipient gateway communities. The Great Northern Railway dominated early landscape changes. The patterns of land use and landscape change over time can tell us a great deal about the changing cultural values and the economic base of these gateway communities. The landscapes of the Glacier gateway communities evolved as the need for more specialized, service-oriented tourist towns grew because a larger number of travelers were visiting the area.

Pre-park Landscape

Before the park was created in 1910, the Great Northern Railway initially shaped the location, function and landscapes of future gateway communities in the Glacier region. The locations of the future gateway communities were designated railroad stations on the east to west line between Browning and Columbia Falls, beginning with Midvale (Glacier Park) on the east and Belton on the west (HRS 1980) (Fig. 4). Stops along the Great Northern fostered settlement in the nearby mountain valleys. The Midvale and Belton stations became the obvious points of entry into the Glacier territory because they were situated closest to the major east and west facing valleys (HRS 1980). The west side gateway community grew faster than the east side partly because of the nearby settlement in the Upper Flathead Valley. However, there was no link between the western gateway and the Flathead Valley except for the Great Northern right-of-way.

Figure 4. Local Scale Map of Glacier National Park



The location map of Glacier National Park and its gateway communities reveals the geographic challenges of west and east side development. [Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1940).]

Thus, the west side settlers followed the railroad construction roads that led to the Lake McDonald Valley, the North Fork Valley and the Middle Fork Valley.

The completion of the Great Northern Railway in 1893 opened an isolated country that lay between the Canadian Pacific rail corridor on the north and the Northern Pacific rail corridor on the south. James J. Hill knew the key to the Great Northern's success lay in the development of agriculture, industry and commerce in the country that adjoined the railroad. The Great Northern was not a land grant railroad, which meant the company did not receive large blocks of land to subsidize the construction of their line such as the Northern Pacific Railroad (Malone 1996). Therefore, the company was dependent on freight shipment and settlement to finance their railway. In addition, the spectacular scenery of the Glacier area enticed visitors to the region, resulting in a demand for better transportation networks and accommodations. But primitive tourist facilities were limited to the Lake McDonald Valley, and access to the mountainous portions of the region remained minimal. The fledgling gateway communities were not equipped to handle the increasing numbers of visitors to the area. Therefore, the railroad invested millions of dollars in the development of transportation networks, accommodations and promotions of the Glacier region in the years prior to 1930 (HRS 1980).

Activities such as mining and tourism generated pre-park demands for gateway communities along the new rail line. The west side settlement was mostly based on subsistence homesteading. A few settlers supplemented their income by finding seasonal jobs in the Flathead Valley. A small mining boom of oil and minerals also sparked

interest in the North Fork Valley and Kintla Lake regions. The spectacular scenery of Glacier created a demand for tourist accommodations and facilities at Belton Station and Apgar. The residents of the Lake McDonald region gradually found their "gold strike" in tourism. In the early 1890's, a few homesteaders settled at the foot of Lake McDonald. Harvey Apgar, an early settler, built the first tourist cabin resort in 1895, and began the concession business in the Glacier region.

On the other hand, the east side development was slower because of the area's isolation and the railway stop was on the Blackfeet Reservation, which discouraged much early white settlement. In addition, the semiarid setting of the eastern slope was difficult to ranch or farm. There were a few ranches established by the early 1890's in the Midvale area such as the Dawson Ranch, the Jennings Ranch, the Brewster Ranch and the Ralston Ranch (Murphy 1982). They were mostly subsistence operations that also outfitted hunting and fishing trips into the Glacier territory for eastern adventurers. However, most of the initial east side settlers were attracted to the Swiftcurrent District because of mining. Copper and traces of other minerals were found on the eastern slope of the Rockies and prospectors pressured the government to buy the land from the Blackfeet Indian Nation. On September 26, 1895, the government purchased the land for \$1.5 million and it was opened to settlement about a year later (Butte Daily Inter Mountain 1896). Still, the large-scale demand for tourist facilities did not emerge on the east side until after the creation of the park.

The first appeal for preservation of the Glacier region was by G.B. Grinnell in 1885. The region became part of the Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve in the early 1890's.

As tourism in the area became well established by the turn of the century, the government's attention toward the area began to change (Buchholtz 1976). Most of the mining in the area ceased by 1906 and G.B. Grinnell turned toward James J. Hill, the president of the Great Northern, for help in creating park legislation. Hill's political influence could help pass the legislation, but he [Hill] also remarked that, "conservation does not mean forbidding access to resources that could be made available for present use. It means the forests and [their] largest development... consistent with the public interest and without waste" (Buchholtz 1976). Other park advocates such as Montana Senator Thomas Carter believed that the conservation movement prohibited the full development of resources and might impede the industrial growth in Montana (Buchholtz 1976). Still, Carter appreciated Hill's position on the park and the Senator realized how the Park improved accessibility to the region's resources. He became a staunch advocate for the creation of the park and proposed the Glacier bill to Congress. By December 1907, the first bill to organize a Glacier National Park was introduced to Congress, even though there was still opposition to its establishment. After two and a half years of local and federal controversy, an Act of Congress created Glacier National Park on May 11, 1910.

Establishment of the Western Gateway

In the years prior to 1910, the west side landscape reflected the growing demand for more visitor facilities. Initially, the western gateway of Belton was established as a railroad stop along the Great Northern. The first homesteaders that arrived in the region

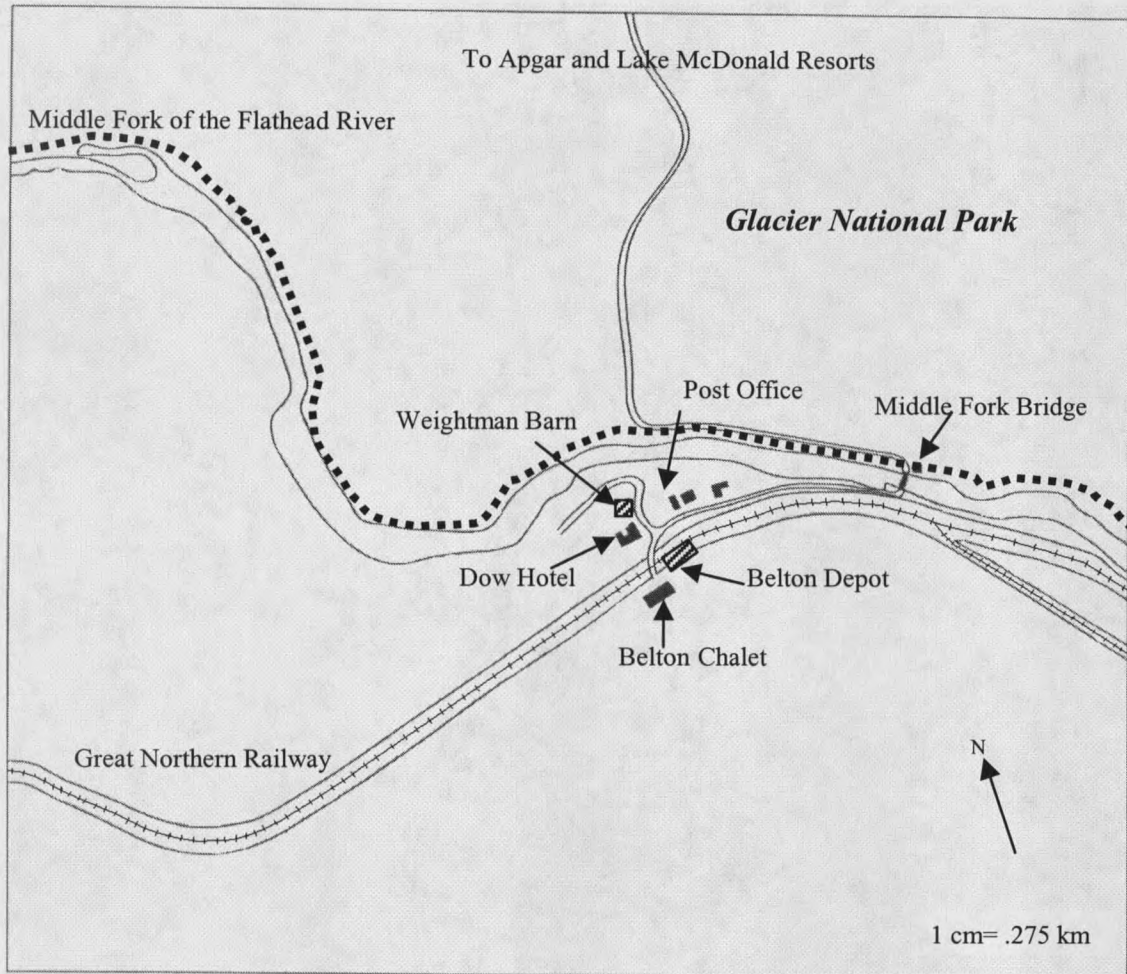
followed the railroad construction roads to Belton Station and to the west side valleys. Some of the first settlers to the region were Milo Apgar, Charlie Howe, George Snyder and Frank Gedhun, who constructed camps at the foot and head of Lake McDonald. Near the Belton Station boxcar, Edward Dow constructed a hotel, store and community hall. The town of Belton was formally surveyed and platted by 1904 (Pierce 1909). Thereafter, the settlement was increasingly shaped by the Great Northern Railway and by the creation of Glacier National Park in 1910.

Land Use Patterns of Belton in 1910

Land use in Belton in 1910 can be classified as commercial, residential or transportation-related (Fig. 5). The commercial development was centered primarily near the railroad depot and also followed the main road connecting Belton to Apgar. Edward Dow built a general store and hotel in 1895 that were the first service facilities in Belton. The post office, built in 1900, was located to the east of the Dow Hotel. There were additional social/community buildings such as the billiard hall and the dance hall.

The construction of the nearby Belton Chalet was a significant change to the Belton landscape. In 1909, the Great Northern authorized the construction of a new depot as well as a hotel. The pending creation of Glacier as a national park made Louis Hill think about the trickle of visitors that could be turned into a large number of railroad travelers. Hill's purpose for the Chalet was to provide luxury services for the increasing numbers of Great Northern passengers on the west side. The Belton Chalet opened on June 27, 1910 about a month and a half after Glacier became a national park. The modernized chalet provided extravagant accommodations for rail visitors that ventured to

Figure 5. Land Use Reconstruction Map—Belton 1910



- Commercial Land Use
- Transportation Land Use [railroad and gas stations]
- Park Boundary

[Source: U.S. Forest Service Map 1907, Reed 1909, Harrington 1957, Buchholtz 1976].

the wilderness of the Park and the primitive tent camps along the lake.

Belton's population remained small in 1910. The residential district was located on the west side of the town and other residences were adjoined to the family businesses. Most residents of the area lived near Apgar, including the Apgars, the Howes, the Gedhuns and others who operated the tourist facilities along the lake. Around 1910, Helen Apgar and Bob Greenwalt were the only children in Belton and Apgar (Harrington 1957). The Belton and Apgar families stayed year round, unlike the many seasonal residents that owned vacation homes on the shores of Lake McDonald.

Transportation-related land uses included the depot, the livery and the Belton/Apgar road. The railroad station was located directly north of the Chalet and directly south of Dow's Hotel. The livery barn was behind the store and hotel. The road from the depot turned east. It followed the tracks of the Great Northern and crossed the Middle Fork of the Flathead River at the wooden bridge. A wall tent was set up as an entrance station, which was located near the bridge on the park side of the river. The entrance road turned west off the bridge and followed the river for a little more than a half-of-a-mile. It went up a hill and past George Snyder's hotel and saloon (1906) through the thick, cedar forests to Apgar and the lake resorts (Great Falls Tribune 1963). Prior to 1910, the road was little more than a trail that cut through the thick timber to the lake (Harrington 1957).

Landscape Change in Pre-Park Belton

An analysis of early photographs and oral histories of Belton reveals significant landscape change as it was shaped over time. Belton Station was nestled among the

densely forested hills of the Middle Fork River Valley. The Dow Hotel and general store as well as the boxcar depot dominated the 1890 landscape. Another boxcar housed the Great Northern Railway agent near the depot boxcar (Harrington 1957). Jack Wise built a wooden bridge before the turn of the century over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River that connected Belton to the concessions at Apgar (HRS 1980) (Fig. 6). The construction of the bridge ended visitor travel across the river in rowboats and connected Belton to the concessions at Apgar. Ed Dow provided the stage service that operated three times daily between the Belton depot and the facilities at the foot of Lake McDonald, even though the Belton/Apgar road was nearly impassable most of the time. Visitor numbers were on the rise to the west side resorts. However, the early Belton landscape stayed relatively undeveloped prior to the creation of the park.

The landscape of 1910 changed with the growing dominance of the Great Northern Railway and the increasing numbers of tourists visiting the west side (Fig. 7). The immediate townsite was cleared of timber and the surrounding hillsides were heavily forested. The Dow Hotel and general store were the center of the developed landscape on the north side of the tracks. The post office was located to the east and in close proximity to the hotel and store (Fig. 8). Behind the hotel was the livery barn that provided transportation for tourists to the concessions at Lake McDonald. The white-washed fences, the groomed lawns and the well-kept pathways revealed a small mountain tourist primarily served the railroad passengers. The placement of the Chalet allowed travelers easy access from the depot to their accommodations when they arrived at Belton. The structure was styled after a Swiss chalet. The most modern technological amenities of the

Figure 6. The First Middle Fork of the Flathead River Bridge



The new wooden bridge ended the crossing of the river by rowboat. Early tourists traveling to the Lake McDonald resorts could now take a stage. A wall tent served as a check station. [Photographer unknown, Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1890).]

Figure 7. Belton During its Heyday



The focus of the town is the depot, the Dow Hotel and the Belton Mercantile. The dirt path connected the town to the Belton Chalet. [Marble Studio, Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1910).]

Figure 8. Belton Post Office

The Belton post office was a social place during the early 1900's. Today it is the only remnant of the town of Belton. [Photographer unknown, Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1915).]

Figure 9. Belton Chalet in 1910

The Belton Chalet was an impressive change to Belton's visual landscape in 1910. [Marble Studio, Courtesy of GNP Archives (circa 1910).]

day were also available for guests. The landscaping resembled the intricate gardens of Europe. The Chalet became the first of the Great Northern's concessions and the only one on the west side of the Park.

Perceptions of Pre-Park Belton

An evaluation of early railroad brochures, local newspapers, letters and diaries can assist in understanding how Belton was perceived by early visitors and residents. Visitors to the Glacier region found primitive accommodations and facilities on the west side before the construction of the Belton Chalet. Railroad travelers spent two to three days on the train traveling from the east. They spent another day traveling by stage between Belton and Apgar after they arrived at the west side depot. Tourists who did venture to the mountains of Glacier stepped off the train at Belton. A photograph from 1908 shows what the rail traveler would have seen as they arrived Belton on the eastbound train (Fig. 10). As the traveler descended from the train at the Belton depot, they saw a cabin and a canvas tent nearby. On the north side of the tracks was the Dow Hotel and general store that was fronted by a white-washed fence. One traveler wrote about the simplicity of the Dow Hotel, "There was no one about, but a candle was lit and the register was open with a note saying which rooms were unoccupied" (Harrington 1957, 1). The next day the visitor would take the Dow or Weightman stage to the tourist resorts at Apgar. The trip from Belton to Lake McDonald was rough with stumps and rocks (Harrington 1957). Sometimes the road was full of holes from blasting stumps. One traveler described the railroad trip from Chicago to Belton and the role played by the small gateway center:

The Great Northern is the only railroad which takes you to Lake McDonald. You can leave Chicago on your through ticket by any one of three routes to St. Paul. The trains that leave at 6:55 reach St. Paul in time for breakfast. Then you connect with the Oriental Limited, the best train of the Great Northern which leaves about ten o'clock a.m. from the same station. This train has the usual Pullmans and very good tourist cars, with a very nice observation car at the rear. It takes two days and the intervening night to reach Belton, the jumping-off place for Lake McDonald. Thus we left St. Paul about 10:00 Thursday morning and reached Belton at 11:30 Friday night. The dining car service is a la carte and very much more expensive than good. At Belton arriving at that hour one goes to a clean, plain, small country hotel near the track, has a good sleep and breakfast for fifty cents, departing thence by "stage"--an open, bouncy wagon--four miles through better and better woods to the Lake itself (Reed 1909).

Other visitors that arrived at Belton often brought their own provisions for their camping trip. A memoir from 1897 described how early travelers took their camping supplies and provisions on a lumber wagon through the heavy cedar trees to a row boat that transported them to the lake camps (Kalispell Daily Inter Lake 1953). Mrs. E.C. O'Neil also recalls a 1903 camping trip to the Glacier region where they had all their provisions, tents and baggage transported to Apgar via the stage, then everything was loaded on the steamboat to be carried to the head of the lake (Kalispell Daily Inter Lake 1953). Many of these were the first visitors to pitch tents where later chalets would stand over the glaciers. Others were some of the first women to climb mountains in the region.

The residents of Belton and Apgar also appreciated the beauty of the Glacier region. Roderick Houston, an early resident of Apgar, first saw Lake McDonald in 1901 and was attracted to the area by the unsurpassed scenery of the mountains (Harrington 1957). Most of the early residents were captivated by Glacier because of its beauty, even though they originally came to the area because of the hunting, fishing, and mining. Accounts from residents and seasonal vacationers describe the smells of the cedar forests, the abundance of game and the beautiful wild flowers (Harrington 1957). Many of the

Figure 10. Eastbound View of the Great Northern Railway



The view of Belton in 1908 reveals a small western railroad town with few services. [Photographer unknown, Courtesy of GNP Archives (1908).]

people who first visited Glacier either stayed or returned every year to the West.

The Great Northern did not begin heavily publicizing the region until after the park's establishment in 1910. Therefore, the number of tourists that entered the area was based entirely on word of mouth, articles written by travelers, and the spectacular scenery that had already lured people to the region. In the early 1900's, a new tourist movement was beginning to grow across America. The "See America First" campaign was built on the ideology of the West as being a place that represented nature and economic opportunity. It offered freedom for migration from the urban, industrialized East that was linked closely to Europe (Shaffer 1994, 1996). The Great Northern launched the

campaign in 1908-1909 that promoted the Glacier region as well as encouraging travel along the "See America First" National Park Route.

The construction of the Belton Chalet began the railroad company's promotion of the west side. The Chalet was built for the comfort of traveling railway passengers and it also became a key west side resort destination. The Chalet "represented the most spacious and sophisticated facility on the park's west side" (Kalispell Daily Inter Lake 1911 a). Great Northern passengers would step off the train at the Belton depot. Within a few steps of leaving the depot, they would walk through a beautiful flowering arbor of Virginia Creeper and up the log steps of the lodge. The atmosphere portrayed the image of the European Alps, a perception that Louis Hill and the Great Northern would promote and build on over the next decades.

Establishment of the Eastern Gateway

Unlike the tourist economy of the west side, east side development was based on mining and ranching. Early residents consisted of a variety of ranchers, business owners, dude ranchers, railroad workers, trappers, bootleggers, wood hawkers and ice cutters (MacCarter 1984). The first families in the area were Horace and Margaret Clarke and Thomas and Isabel [Clarke] Dawson. The Clarke Family arrived in 1888 and ranched land grants until they bought property on the north west side of the Great Northern tracks. Shortly after, in 1893, the Dawson family followed the Clarkes to Midvale. They established and operated the 4/X Ranch on the south side of the Great Northern Railway. The other resident was Mr. Bland, the Great Northern depot agent.

Midvale became a temporary stop for miners traveling to the Swiftcurrent District. Minerals were discovered along the eastern slope near the Canadian border and similar to most mining areas, development was quick and short-lived. A minor gold strike occurred near Midvale around 1900, but it was also abandoned. In the end, the east side was left with ghost towns and some lingering miners (Buchholtz 1976). A formal plat of Midvale was created in 1907. The Secretary of the Interior authorized "not less than eighty acres of land to be set aside for town-site purposes, at or near the present settlements of Browning and Babb" (McCabe 1910). The government wanted to establish a route of commerce through the east side and the Blackfeet Reservation. Thus, the first plat of Midvale was created along the Great Northern Railway. The original plat surveyed by the Department of the Interior Land Office was recorded in 1910. However, the pre-park landscape of Midvale amounted to really nothing more than the Great Northern tracks until after the establishment of the park (Buchholtz 1976).

Land Use Patterns of Midvale in 1910

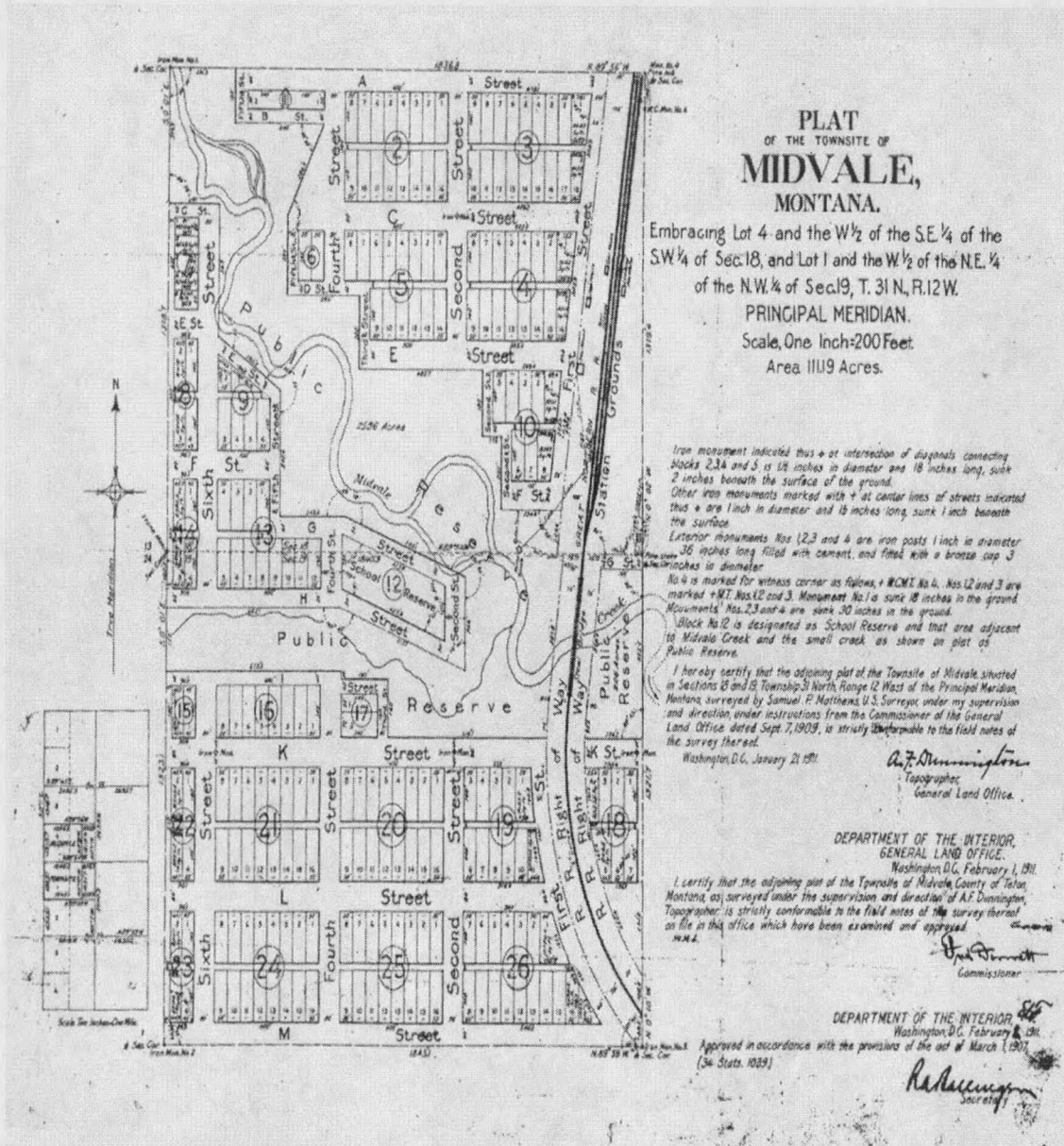
The original map of Midvale was surveyed and platted in 1907 (Fig. 11). The townsite was designed to straddle Midvale Creek along the tracks of the Great Northern. However, the land for the townsite was sold to the railroad and the land use patterns were changed from the original plat map. Activities in the area were split between three different sites. These included the Great Northern hotel site (original plat of Midvale (1907)) and the nearby Clarke (1914) and Dawson (1920) Townsites (Fig. 12). Each nucleus of activity had its own cluster of commercial, residential and transportation land uses. However, the initial divisions of land use in each section were not necessarily clear

until later years. For example, the original Midvale site was a tent camp site along Midvale Creek at the turn of the century until the land at Lot 1, T30N, R12W and Lot 4, T31N, R12W, was purchased by the Great Northern Railway in 1912.

The section that later became the Clarke Townsite (1914) or the "Glacier Park Original" was located northwest of the Midvale (1907) plat site. The Horace Clarke Family had a ranch house and outbuildings. The Clarke and Dawson families had built identical two-story houses with a front veranda and a lean-to-kitchen. The ranches were situated a half a mile away from each other near Midvale Creek. There were a few logging cabins north of the Clarke land. A wagon road cut through into the northern mining districts of the Swiftcurrent Valley. There were also game and Indian trails established along the eastern front.

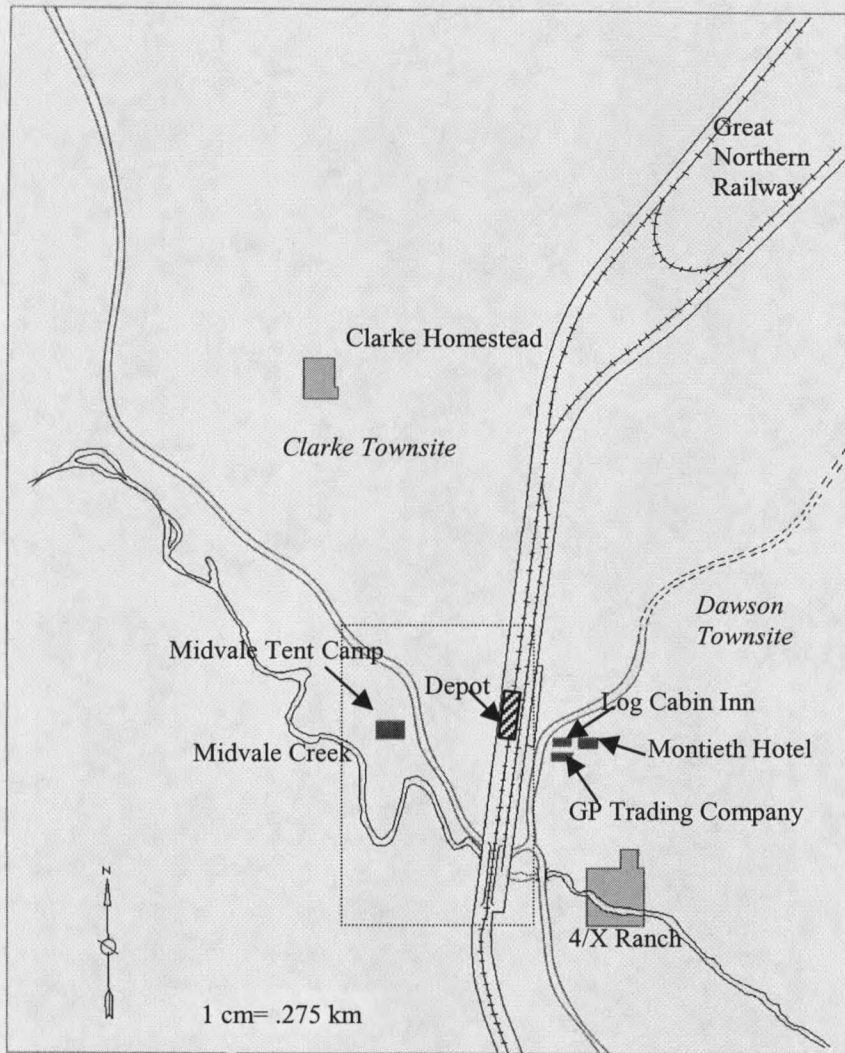
The Dawson ranch, the 4/X Ranch, was located a quarter of a mile southeast of the Great Northern Railway, near Midvale Creek (Fig. 13). A portion of the ranch later became the Dawson Townsite (1920). The original Dawson house burned at the turn of the century. Two early commercial buildings were constructed on the Dawson site near the railroad tracks, including the Montieth Hotel (1910-11) and the Glacier Park Trading Post Company (a general store)(1910-11). Dawson contracted out his carpentry skills to build these buildings. Across the street from the general store and next to the hotel, he built a cabin for his family in 1909. A crude wagon road paralleled the railroad tracks through the future Dawson site. The wagon road crossed under the railroad bridge and continued to the future site of the hotel and the Clarke ranch (Fig. 14). A bridge

Figure 11. The Original Plat Map for Midvale in 1907



The land was never developed according to the plat because it was sold to the railroad for the construction of the Glacier Park Hotel. [Courtesy of GNP Archives (1907).]

Figure 12. Land Use Reconstruction Map—Midvale 1910



- Commercial Land Use
- Transportation Land Use [railroad and gas stations]
- Residential Land Use
- Original Plat of Midvale

[Source: Buchholtz 1976, Murphy 1982, MacCarter 1984]

paralleled the railroad trestle at the bottom of the hill behind the present school that connected to the continuing westbound rail wagon road (Fig. 15).

Landscape Change in Pre-Park Midvale

Documents, maps and photographs reveal the pace of landscape change in early Midvale prior to the 1910 establishment of the park. The original settlers in the region discovered a lush valley at the base of the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. Tom Dawson thought the area was a good place because it had a lot of timber, good cattle range, plenty of water and the railroad was already built (MacCarter 1984). The accessibility into the Glacier region from the east side, however, was much more limited than from the west. St. Mary's Lake was the east side's version of Lake McDonald.

Figure 13. The Dawson 4/X Ranch Site



The old barn in this photograph is located near the original Dawson Ranch site. [Author photograph (2000).]

