

WHITE ALMA BRIDWELL

WITH GOD IN THE
YELLOWSTONE

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PREFACE

In this volume I have attempted not simply to give a brief account of a recent trip to Yellowstone National Park and to describe some of Nature's grandeurs, but to elucidate spiritual truths that were demonstrated in this place of many "wonders" in a thousand miracles before my eyes.

There is no more poetical, picturesque, and fascinating spot on the globe, and no other place where magnificence and sublimity blend so harmoniously with the softest tints and colorings as in the Yellowstone region.

Here are geological formations in which the book of ages has been written in inks of variegated hues. In the canyons, rivers, and waterfalls, in the lakes, springs, and pools, specimens of Eden have been preserved on the outside of a thin crust, covering the sulphurous flames of the regions below, where the rumblings of God's wrath are heard threatening the world with judgments.

The mighty forces that operated in ages past are still at His command, demonstrated by the boiling springs, the volcanoes and spouting geysers. Ten thousand omens are heralding the approach of the winding-up of this age, and the beginning of a new dispensation in which all men shall acknowledge Jehovah in His majesty and power as the one and only Potentate worthy of the adoration and homage of the human race.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT

In a book entitled, *The Discovery of Yellowstone Park*, written by Nathaniel P. Langford, the author gives an account of an expedition of 130 persons who started from St. Paul, June 16, 1862, for the Salmon River, as it had been widely rumored that extensive placer mines had been discovered there. The expedition was led by Captain James L. Fisk, the noted Indian fighter. Among his assistants were E. H. Burritt, Nathaniel P. Langford, and Samuel R. Bond, who acted as secretary. David E. Folsom, Robert C. Knox, Cornelius Bray, Patrick Doherty, Ard Godfrey, and Patrick Bray, were selected for guard duty. Many well-known pioneers of Montana were in this company, whose names are familiar to the writer.

After eighteen weeks of hazardous adventure, the expedition arrived, on the 23d of October, at Grasshopper Creek. The weather being too cold for them to proceed on the journey, they decided to camp in that locality for the winter. This region was then the rendezvous of the Bannack Indians; and the St. Paul expedition named the settlement Bannack.

To me it is a strange coincidence that this expedition of pioneers should have left St. Paul on the day of my birth, the 16th of June, 1862; and that on March 31st, 1882, a little more than nineteen years, later, I should reach this same locality, having been engaged to teach the Bannack public school, which I began the 4th of April.

Frequently the early history of the town and its inhabitants was rehearsed in my hearing, but many deplored the fact that some of the old-timers had moved to Virginia City, Helena, Butte, and other places, and that the placer mines of Bannack were not so prosperous as in former days. But there were enough of the pioneers left to keep fresh in the memories of the younger generation the stories of adventures with wild beasts, the Indians, etc. Some of the stories were looked upon as fabrications, while others were known to be plain statements of facts.

I heard so much about the Indians, their reprisals and cruelty, that I lived in constant dread of them, even when there was no cause for alarm. A short time before I reached Montana, which was then a territory, there had been an uprising of some tribes, and a number of persons living in Bannack and vicinity had been killed. When they were on the warpath at this particular time, the inhabitants of Bannack had to barricade themselves in the new brick courthouse and stay for days to protect themselves from a general slaughter.

I was not afraid of the squaws with their papooses strapped to boards on their backs, but when the "bucks," as they were called, pressed their flat noses against the window-panes asking for muck-a-muck (food), they frightened me so that I could not get over it for hours. No one else seemed to have any fear of them, even though harrowing stories were everywhere being told about their treachery and cruelty. I made my home with Aunt Eliza, my mother's sister, who had married Dillon B. Mason, a pioneer of Montana, about ten years before. It was she who had engaged the public school for me and had insisted on my coming to Montana, from Kentucky, to teach at Bannack.

When the Indians on their foraging expeditions of the kitchen, it seemed to be my lot to see them first. When they saw how I was disturbed at their presence, they would throw their heads back and laugh, and say, "White squaw, heaply big fool." My uncle and aunt were always on friendly terms with them, calling them John, Jim, and other familiar names. This pleased them very much, especially when food was given them; and I knew they would be around again in a few days, much to my annoyance.

Patrick Bray of Bannack, whose name is mentioned in the St. Paul expedition, was one of the old pioneers who could tell more "blood and thunder" stories than anyone else in the community.

In 1870, a party composed of some of the most prominent citizens of Montana, under the leadership of General Washburn, then the Surveyor-General of the Territory, went on an exploring expedition to the Yellowstone regions. The names of some of the members of this party were

household words in the early days of Montana, and familiar to the writer. Among them were Cornelius Hedges, Nathaniel P. Langford, the first superintendent of the Park, T. C. Everts, S. T. Hauser, and Lieut. G. C. Doane. The reader will note the fact that N. P. Langford was a member of the St. Paul party under the leadership of Captain Fisk, that landed on Grasshopper Creek, Montana, in the fall of 1862; and much of the success of the expedition was due to his heroism. Also much credit is due him for his unabating devotion to the cause of the republic, and the service he rendered in having the region set apart as a National Park, March 1st, 1872. Until this time, there were no restrictions on hunting, trapping, gathering of specimens, etc., or to fencing in the geysers by private individuals. THE ACT OF THE DEDICATION OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, approved March 1st, 1872, was as follows:

"Be it Enacted by the Senate and the House Of Representatives of the United States Of America in Congress Assembled:

"That the tract of land in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, lying near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, and described as follows, to-wit: Commencing at the junction of Gardiner River with the Yellowstone River, and running east to the meridian passing ten miles to the eastward of the most eastern point of Yellowstone Lake; thence south along the said meridian to the parallel of latitude passing ten miles south of the most southern point of Yellowstone Lake; thence west along said parallel to the meridian passing fifteen miles west of the most western point of Madison Lake; thence north along said meridian to the latitude of the junction of the Yellowstone and Gardiner Rivers; thence east to place of beginning—is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy or sale under the laws of the United States, and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people; and all persons who shall locate, settle upon or occupy the same or any part thereof, except as hereinafter provided, shall be considered trespassers and removed therefrom.

"Sec. 2. The said public Park shall be under the exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior, whose duty it shall be, as soon as practicable, to make and publish such rules and regulations as he may deem necessary and proper for the care and management of the same. Such regulations shall provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities or wonders within said park and their retention in their natural condition.

"The Secretary may, in his discretion, grant leases for building purposes, for terms not exceeding ten years, of small parcels of ground, at such places in said park as shall require the erection of buildings for the accommodation of visitors; all the proceeds of said leases, and all other revenues that may be derived from any source connected with said park, to be expended under his direction in the management of the same, and the construction of roads and bridle paths therein. He shall provide against the wanton destruction of the fish and game found within said park, and against their capture or destruction for the purpose of merchandise or profit. He shall also cause all persons trespassing upon the same after the passage of this act to be removed therefrom, and generally shall be authorized to take all such measures as shall be necessary or proper to fully carry out the objects and purpose of this act."

CHAPTER I

ENROUTE TO THE PARK

On September 2, 1919, I left Zarephath, New Jersey for Denver, Colorado. Seven days later, accompanied by my brother and his wife, Rev. Charles W. and Lillian O. Bridwell, I started on a trip to the Yellowstone National Park. Traffic on the railroads was so heavy out of Denver that we had some difficulty in getting properly routed, but finally succeeded. Twenty-four hours later, we reached Cody, Wyoming, the eastern entrance to the Park. We secured lodging at the Irma Hotel, founded by William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), and named for his favorite daughter.

On the walls of the office and in the halls of this hotel were splendid paintings, in which the whole history of the famous frontiersman and Indian fighter was shown. Hours could profitably be spent studying these pictures, in which one could learn more about the "Wild West," of former days, than one could get from the average history. All of the famous Indian chiefs were there, among them, Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Black Bird. Their features were so perfectly outlined I almost felt I was looking into their faces.

There were so many tourists we were fortunate in getting accommodations at this place, when arrangements had not been made ahead. Since I felt the need of rest, and my brother wanted more information concerning the tour through the Park, we concluded to stay over for a day. We held an open-air Gospel meeting here, and had the opportunity of getting acquainted with some of the people whom we told about the work of the Pillar of Fire organization.

At one time we had about decided to hire an automobile and drive through the Park, but later, concluded it would be too much of an undertaking, and made arrangements with the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company to take us through for about forty-three dollars each; this included board and lodging at the Yellowstone Camps.

At 8:15, on the morning of September 12, we boarded one of the big, yellow touring-cars, with a number of other passengers, and proceeded on our journey. We had nothing to do with the selection of our automobile party, but could not have been better suited. About four miles west of Cody, we entered the Shoshone Canyon, three miles from the first tunnel. In the meantime, we were climbing up the mountainside so rapidly that it was soon hundreds of feet to the chasm below.

In a little while we reached the top of the Shoshone Dam, to the left, and here made our first stop. The scenery, while approaching and when leaving the dam, was the most magnificent I have ever beheld. Word-pictures fail to give even a slight idea of the depths of the canyon, the wonderful tints and hues caused by mineral formations and volcanic action in ages past. The trees on either side were of such immense height, that I was almost staggered. I was not expecting anything like this, on the run from Cody to the boundary of the Park; and surprises awaited me every moment of the time.

While waiting at the dam, I copied from a board the following dimensions:

Height, 328 feet,

Thickness at base, 108 feet,

Thickness at top, 10 feet,

Length of crest, 200 feet,

Capacity of reservoir, 456,000 acre-feet,

Area of water surface, 10 square miles,

Maximum width, 4 miles,

Maximum depth, 233 feet,

Length of spillway, 300 feet,

Work begun, 1905,

Work completed, 1910,

Total cost, \$1,354,000.

The scenery approaching the dam on both sides, was to me so unparalleled and inspiring, my heart cried out with the Psalmist:

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.... For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

After leaving the dam, we passed slowly through the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth tunnels. Twelve miles from Cody we had a magnificent view of the great Shoshone Reservoir at our left. Then we passed the Morris Ranch, crossed the bridge over the Shoshone River and turned to the right. We passed a school house, Hollister's Ranch, Frost and Richard's Ranch, entered Shoshone National Forest and took the left side road to Canyon Forest Ranger Station. Two miles farther was the overhanging Rock Cliff, and other places of less importance between it and the Holy City at the right.

About forty-one miles from Cody we came to the Palisades; then followed Mesa Creek, Good Camp, Elephant Head at the right, Mutilated Hand, and Eagle Creek. About fifty-three miles from Cody we arrived at Pahaska Tepee Lodge, founded by Buffalo Bill. This station is only two miles from the boundary of the Park. The yellow cars turn in at the lodge for luncheon. A stop of about an hour and a half was allowed here. The house is built of unplanned logs with a large fireplace and small windows. It has wide porches, provided with easy chairs for the tourists. While it has a wild, rustic appearance it is homelike.

A little brown bear chained to a tree on the grass plot in front furnished much amusement for the company by turning somersaults. Three or four bears had been killed a few days before, somewhere in the neighborhood of the lodge, and bear meat was served at luncheon. However, none of the three members of our party ate animal flesh.

We asked that eggs might be substituted, but our request was not granted, and we had to be content with what we could get. We did not find the courtesy and interest manifested in our welfare here, on the part of the managers, that we expected; and we felt that if we had to meet the same difficulties farther on, it would be a matter of regret to us that we did not hire a conveyance and make an independent tour. Fortunately, we found a decided difference in the management at the camps.

Two young women, who had been residing in the park camps for the summer, had arranged with the driver of our car to sit on the front seat with him on the trip from Cody to Yellowstone Camp. However, they were not on hand in the morning when we were ready to start, and a person who had later secured the front seat kindly let me have it. I was grateful for the protection the wind-shield gave me, and of being able to keep my feet warm near the engine. When the young women found that they had been left, they hired an automobile and overtook us. They paid a woman chauffeur, clad in men's clothing, ten dollars for this trip; and just as we were halting at the dam they drove up, to the delight of the young man who was driving our car.

Nothing was said to me about giving them the front seat, but they made some remarks in the presence of others that showed plainly what was on their minds. I kept my place until we reached Pahaska Lodge. In the meantime "Heine," the driver, as he was called, seemed more or less excited, and occasionally called to them in the rear seat. He was running at such speed it was difficult for some of the passengers to keep their places, especially where there were sharp curves in the road. He was, no doubt, a skilful driver. He seemed to know that he was exceeding the speed limit, and shouted out to one of the young women, "Ruth, are you all there?" A few minutes after this he ran against the post of a bridge and came near having a wreck, but no one said anything to him, nor made a protest against his carelessness and levity when he should have been attending to business.

"Heine" spent the time at Pahaska Lodge in the company of the two girls; and when the time came to go, he did not wait, as others did, to load up in front of the building, but took them out to the rear where the car was standing and put them in the front seat. There was a protest on the part of all

the other passengers, who insisted that he should give me the seat I had occupied in the morning, but he was unyielding; and after a half hour's delay and controversy they saw the utter futility of trying to convince him of his act of injustice, and proceeded on the journey. However, it served the purpose of quieting him down and causing him to be more careful in the dangerous places of the road.

The woman in charge at the Pahaska Lodge, who had failed to serve us with eggs, after one of the waitresses had promised them to me, was chafing under an impeachment of her lack of good will and hospitality toward some of her patrons; and came boldly out to the car, and in the presence of every one took sides with the driver, assuring him that she would stand for the delay. This greatly strengthened him in the stand he had taken.

It was not very pleasant to ride behind a driver with so much responsibility, who was carrying on a flirtation. I once saw a brakeman flirting with a young woman when he should have been attending to business. Suddenly, he lost his footing, fell between the cars and was crushed to death. Human nature has been so weakened through the fall that there is not much dependence to be put in one where a play by the opposite sex is being made on the heartstrings. Samson was shorn of his strength by the fair-faced Delilah, and made to grind without eyes in the mills of the Philistines, after he had rent a lion, carried off the gates of Gaza, and defied all the enemies of Israel.

There is too much good-natured toleration of such things, where human lives are involved. Most people choose the path of least resistance, when it does not seriously interfere with their rights or comfort, but not so with our fellow passengers, four of whom were devout members of the Friends' Church. There was a principle involved, and they did not hesitate to show on which side they were. We enjoyed the company of these "Friends" very much. The two gentlemen and their wives were our companions on the trip from the morning we left Cody till the day we parted at the Old Faithful Camp at the Upper Geyser Basin.

CHAPTER II

GRAND CANYON OF THE YELLOWSTONE

After crossing the Yellowstone boundary, about two miles west of Pahaska Tepee Lodge, I began to feel an atmosphere of freedom that I had not hitherto enjoyed on the trip. I felt that the Yellowstone National Park, with all of its wonders and many interests, belonged to me as much as to any other person on the earth; and from that moment it seemed that I was walking with God to the very gates of heaven and to the brink of hell. The freedom of animal life in the Park, brought to my mind vivid pictures of the Millennium, when, as Isaiah says, nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. It should be a matter of great interest and satisfaction to Americans that our government has the custody of the Yellowstone—that man with selfish interests is prohibited from laying claim to anything within its boundaries, and is compelled to refrain from marring or defacing the formations around the geysers and other places, and from destroying animal life.

It is to be deplored that so few know how rich they are in the gifts that God and nature have bestowed upon us as a people, in this vast region of more than 3,000 square miles of so many miracles and wonders.

About eight miles from the border, we came to Sylvan Pass; then followed Snow Fall, Lake Eleanor, Sylvan Lodge, Sylvan Lake, and Wedded Trees, at the left. About eleven miles from Sylvan Pass, we came to Turbid Lake, Osprey Nest in a tree at the right, Fishing Bridge, Yellowstone River, and turned to the right to Grand Canyon.

Our first stop after leaving Pahaska Lodge was at Mud Volcano and Green Gable Spring, at the left. This was the first place where we had found any disturbance on the surface caused by the heated regions below. The angry crater of the volcano resembled, in some respects, the Mammoth Paint Pots in the Lower Geyser Basin, but unlike the latter, there was nothing beautiful about it,—it was simply a great mass of boiling mud, manifesting such intense heat as to spout up several feet, threatening to bespatter those who came too near. It was enclosed by a railing, around which was a board walk. Below the mud geyser was a boiling spring where the water, clear as crystal, poured out of the ground and was carried away.

I ventured to put my finger into the water and was nearly burned. This place was only a suggestion of what we were to see later in the Geyser Basins.

At our left, eight miles from Sylvan Pass, we had a splendid view of Yellowstone Lake in the distance. In the heart of the Park Plateau, averaging more than eight thousand feet elevation, surrounded by mountains, waterfalls, and cascades, is the lake, twenty miles in length, which, at its elevation, has but one rival, Lake Titicaca, in the Andes. As our party did not visit West Thumb, it was our privilege to see the lake only at a distance, where we could have but a slight idea of its beauty and immensity.

"David E. Folsom, of the Folsom and Cook Exploring Party, in 1869 says:

'As we were about departing on our homeward trip, we ascended the summit of a neighboring hill and took a final look at Yellowstone Lake. Nestled among the forest-crowned hills which bounded our vision, lay this inland sea, its crystal waves dancing and sparkling in the sunlight as if laughing with joy for their wild freedom. It is a scene of transcendent beauty, which has been viewed by but few white men, and we felt glad to have looked upon it before its primeval solitude should be broken by the crowds of pleasure-seekers, which at no distant day will throng its shores.'

For the next few miles the scenery was most fascinating, but it was only a prelude to what awaited us in the first glimpse we were to get of the Grand Canyon.

We halted at Inspiration Point, where I followed others down the steps to a great ledge of rocks overhanging the chasm. The scene that greeted my vision was so overwhelming and unexpected that I became dizzy and had to make my way back to the car, supported by the railing.

This yawning gulf with its awful depths of nearly two thousand feet, through which the river, like a silver thread was wending its way, and the sublime coloring produced by nature, reflected from the mineral formations on the sides of the great canyon, was a sight too much for human frailty, and I had to be satisfied to take a glimpse and wait until I could recuperate from the shock before attempting another adventure.

Before leaving Inspiration Point, some one shouted, "See the eagle's nest!" and there, looking down into a tall pine tree at the right of the descent, was the nest; but I was more interested in the canyon, for I had never had the faintest conception of what it really is.

When I had recuperated somewhat from the bewilderment, I was inclined to charge those who had visited the Park before, among whom were my brother and his wife, with stupidity and a lack of appreciation for not having done more to tell of such grandeur. But afterwards I had to admit that the half cannot be told however much anyone might try. Unlike the Royal Gorge in Colorado, we were not at the bottom looking up, but at the top looking down into the silent and awful depths. It was as if the earth had rent asunder and we were standing on the brink looking over into the abyss.

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