

May 18, Monday. Rode to Sun River Land & Livestock Co. ranch. Then to Witmer ranch, 9 to 2:30 p.m. Delivered Willow Creek Stock Co.'s permit to Foreman Brooks.

May 19, Tuesday. Counted for Willow Creek Stock Co. 235 head cattle; for E. S. Anderson 60 head; and 12 head for G. W. Hamilton on Division 6. Found 60 head cattle and 25 horses, property of Joe Ford branded $\frac{Y}{2}$ on left side, horses on left hip. With the assistance of E. S. Anderson, Wm. Crispin, Jos. Owens, Robert Brooks, J. T. Weimer drove same into Ford's pasture and partially repaired fence. Requested Mr. Henry Ford, in presence of above-named parties, to notify Mr. Joe Ford to repair fence and keep cattle off the Forest. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

May 20. Wednesday. Rained and snowed all day.

May 21, Thursday. Counted 128 head cattle for E. J. and Mrs. Murphy; 72 head for E. S. Anderson, and 37 head for John Willard. Rode to E. Beach ranch, camped. 7 to 4:30.

May 22, Friday. Rained until 2 p.m. Counted 500 head of cattle into Division 4 for E. Beach. 10 to 7 p.m.

May 23, Saturday. Left Beach ranch 6 a.m., arrived Hannan Gulch 11 a.m. Left Hannan 3:20 p.m. James Caldwell ranch 7:30 p.m. Stopped Palmer's for supper.

May 24, Sunday. Counted 300 head of cattle for McDonald and Rimell. 147 head for Woolman & Christian. Hannan Gulch 3 p.m. 7 to 3.

May 25, Monday. Rained until 5 p.m. Washed clothes.

May 26, Tuesday. Rode to Witmer's ranch. Rained all day.

May 27, Wednesday. Rained all day.

May 28, Thursday. Counted for W.C.S. Co., 55 head; E. S. Anderson, 96 head; James Owens, 20 head; Ann Nette, 100 head; E. J. and Mrs. Murphy, 72 head; Tom Barr, 35 head; Ballinger, 32 head; Jos. Ford, 158 head; Henry Ford, 158 head. Rode home to Hannan. 7 to 5:30.

May 29, Friday. Rode to R. C. Palmer's. Surveyed June 11 application for him. Then to Augusta via G. B. Christian ranch. Rained from 4 on.

May 30, Saturday. Rained all day. Cunniff reported and returned.

May 31, Sunday. Rained all day.

June 1, Monday. Cleared up about 11 a.m. Rode to G. B. Christian ranch via steel bridge in afternoon.

June 2, Tuesday. Rode to Hannan 11:30 a.m.

June 3, Wednesday. Started to rain again at 5:30 a.m. Saddled up after dinner and rode to Two Shacks with Brucegard. Rained more or less all day.

June 4, Thursday. Rain again. Rode up to Cates Park and returned. WET. Creeks all rising fast.

At this time, I owned five head of horses, two small Indian ponies that I had started out with when I went to work (used as pack animals), a gray Arabian-bred saddle mare and ideal mountain horse that I bought from McCain when he moved to the new Custer at Ashland, Montana, and a buckskin with black stripe down his back that I had acquired early in 1907. These two did all the riding work. Buck lived up to the buckskin black stripe reputation for long-winded toughness. It was a pleasure to ride him, but you had to tend to business--he was not adverse to trying his rider out if you got a little careless. Nancy was an ideal mountain horse; no matter how poor the feed was, she was there wherever you laid that saddle down. When camped out, she would come in at night just to see if you were there.

June 5, Friday. Water-bound at Two Shacks. Rained all day.

June 6, Saturday. Rain again. Rode to Hannan. River highest it has been in 20 years. Trail at Steps washed away. Nearly all of the Blacktail flat gone. Patrick bottom covered with water.

June 7, Sunday. Rain all day.

June 8, Monday. Counted for Jordan and Canon, 200 head; W. E. Keller, 30 head; JPW, 294 head; W & C, 38 head; and Mrs. S. T. C., 80 head. Rode to Augusta via steel bridge.

June 9, Tuesday. Wrote to Supervisor. Forwarded scale reports on Furman & Long Timber Sale No. 1, April 23, 1908. Could not get up Ford Creek on account of high water.

June 10, Wednesday. Rode from Augusta to Camp Furman on S. Fork. 8 to 6.

June 11, Thursday. Went over cutting area. Rode down to West Fork with Furman to look at some timber. Made out timber sale application for Furman and Long for 200 cords.

June 12, Friday. Rode from Camp Furman to E. Beach ranch. Stopped at Mining Camp 2 hours to dry out clothes. 8:30 to 6, sure wet, had to swim twice.

June 13, Saturday. Rode to Augusta. Had two horses shod. Bought and packed up two loads of supplies.

June 14, Sunday. Packed up and pulled to G. B. Christian ranch via N. Fork steel bridge.

June 15, Monday. Rode to Hannan Gulch. 9 to 2:30.

June 16, Tuesday. Baked bread. Made a pair of alforjas and chored around in general. Repaired a tent.

June 17, Wednesday. Rode to Two Shacks with outfit. Camped. 9 to 3:30.

June 18, Thursday. Crossed river and rode up to S. Fork and camped about 2 miles above Bear Cr. 9 to 3.

June 19, Friday. Rode up to Camp Furman. Came back with Cunniff and A. Furman. Looked over some timber, and Furman decided it would not suit. Started for Hannan Gulch. Commenced to rain, and camped Choteau Cabins with Furman and Wm. Hoxey.

June 20, Saturday. Rode down the river to Hannan Gulch, 9 to 12:30. Weeded garden and hoed.

June 21, Sunday. Washed and scrubbed.

June 22, Monday. Rode up Beaver Cr. and down Willow Creek to Witmer's ranch. Range in good condition. Road badly washed in many places. 8:30 to 3.

June 23, Tuesday. Rode to Sun River Stock Co. ranch, then to Home Gulch, then to Augusta. 8 to 4. Counted for S.R.S. Co. 150 head cattle and 30 horses.

June 24, Wednesday. Talked to Guard Daily on telephone with regard to trespass. Rode from Augusta to Elk Creek R.S. Had a horse shod. Rode from Elk Cr. R.S. to Cunniff ranch.

June 25, Thursday. Rode from Cunniff's to Steinbeck and Alts, thence to Stearns, thence to Cunniff's and to Elk Cr. R.S. 6:30 to 10:45 p.m. In company with Guard Dailey on trespass business.

June 26, Friday. Rode to Augusta to mail some letters. Rode to Witmer's Ranch. 9 to 9:30.

June 27, Saturday. Rode up Willow Cr. and down Beaver Cr. and to Hannan Gulch. River was deep; Buck had to swim, and he didn't like it. Measured 10 cords of wood for J. R. Witmer and 20 cords for Henry Ford. 7:30 to 3:30. Cold and heavy wind.

June 28, Sunday. Rode up to Choteau Cabins to see Furman concerning some timber affairs.



1908 Log jam at Reef below Big George.

Photo by author



1908 - Bob Palmer at Choteau Cabins on Arsenic Creek.

Photo by author

June 29, Monday. Returned to Hannan. Sawed some stove wood. 7:30 to 5:15.

June 30, Tuesday. Cleaned up road along river at mouth of Hannan Gulch. Also tried to locate ford. But found that it had been washed out. 8 to 4:20.

July 1, 1908, brought about quite a considerable change in the organization of the U.S. Forest Service. Six Regions were established with the headquarters of Region 1 at Missoula, Montana. A considerable number of new National Forests were also created, one of the new National Forests being the Lewis and Clark National Forest, with headquarters at Choteau, Montana. It included the area east of the Continental Divide, extending from the south line of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation to, and including, all the drainage of the Dearborn River. Later on, the north end was extended through the Indian Reservation and the Great Northern Railroad became the north boundary.

On July 3, I rode into Augusta and learned for the first time about the change of organization. On July 7, I rode to Choteau, curious about what was going on and how it would affect me personally. Met E. A. Sherman, chief inspector from Missoula, who was in Choteau to set up the new Forest headquarters. Learned that Wm. H. Daus, of Kalispell, would be the Forest Supervisor of the new Lewis and Clark National Forest. I believe that Sherman was the first Regional Forester of the new Region 1. Anyway, we had an informative, to me, visit and I returned to Hannan Gulch on the 8th. The Ranger District Post Office address was changed from Augusta to Elizabeth, which was located at the Jim Caldwell ranch at the head of Barrett Creek, a branch of Deep Creek. Mail from Choteau came direct to Elizabeth twice a week. Augusta remained as the supply point for Hannan.

At this time there was a mining claim on Lange Creek where there was some evidence of sulphur and related minerals, similar to those in the mineral warm spring at the forks of the North Fork and across the river from the Lange Creek claims. So I learned about mining claims reports made annually on all unpatented claims on the National Forests by examining Mountain Chief mining claim on July 9, 1908.

This was the year of extremely high water on Sun River, the highest on record to 1908. During the month of June and early July, my trips to Augusta and the Ford Creek area were, of necessity, made by way of the steel bridge northeast of Augusta. On June 27, I tried the ford at Home Gulch, and my saddle horse swam it. That was an experience to remember. The river was about 150 feet wide. From the south side, the ford angled upstream along the edge of a gravel bar until within 40 or 50 feet of the north shore and the main channel. Up to this point, the water came up to the top of my stirrups--I had my boots in them for sure. Buck hesitated for a second or two, then stepped off and down we went--Buck completely under,

and the water at my armpits. Up he came swimming, threw his head high in the air, and yelled "WAH!" At least, that's what it sounded like to a guy too scared to say anything. We made it all right, but it could have been the early end of a Forest Ranger career. The box canyon below would have taken care of that. This high water took out some of the oldest fords along the river making it necessary to locate new places where it could be crossed safely.

After the crest of the flood had passed, Furman and Long had been cutting timber on the South Fork of the North Fork, and had planned to drive several hundred cords of poles, posts, and house logs down the river to sell at Fort Shaw and Sun River. It was a real job and it took them all of July and August to get it done. Every stick had to be hand-logged through the box canyon after foot logs for the men to walk on had been installed. I have some pictures of log jams and the box canyon which show the difficulties encountered. Doc Long, the Dupuyer poker winner, lost considerable money on the operation. Furman had none to lose.

During July I was busy irrigating the hay meadow and garden at Hannan, building a new trail along the river between Hannan and Blacktail Gulch with the help of Guard Cunniff, and setting permanent corners on the Ranger Station surveys we had made in February (I wonder how many of them could be identified in 1972), and checking grazing use on the various grazing divisions and allotments, for instance.

July 24, 1908. In camp at Two Shacks with herder Olaf Brucegard. Rode upriver to Tie Camp and returned. Posted seven Fire Warnings. Mr. Porter, railroad engineer, camped here tonight. (He was looking for a new railroad route through, or over, the Continental Divide.) Flies were very bad. In fact, they were so bad that, from early forenoon until sundown, the cattle assembled in large bunches at regular spots covering 2 or 3 acres where the dust was 6 or 8 inches deep. Here they milled and bawled all day long, raising a dust cloud at times a hundred feet, or more, in the air. (Wouldn't the environmentalists have been excited about that!) The noise could be heard for miles. Horse flies, deer flies, no-see-ums, gnats, and every known flying, pestiferous insect was present. Your saddle horse, even the most gentle, was almost unridable. I had my bridle hung with strips of cloth as a fly brush, and I also had a large gunny sack over the horse's head and neck that reached back to the saddle. Ripped the sewed seam out, cut ear and eye holes and put it on under the bridle. It helped some, or I would have been grounded. Oh yes, we had flying ants, too, which did not help.

On July 28, I had visitors, official that is - E. A. Sherman, chief inspector; Dr. Long; and Bill Hoxey rode in to Hannan. I fed them, and they left to look over the river log-drive operation which was running into more money than the Doctor had expected.

Now it was August and time to put up the winter hay for the horses. There was an old mowing machine at the station, source unknown, and I scrounged enough parts to put it in mowing order. I borrowed a harness, and my little old Indian cayuses from the Flathead did a fair job of moving the mower. By August 6, we had the hay stacked--13 loads in all, 10 or 12 ton.

WHAT ABOUT FOREST FIRES? Well, there just weren't any, that's all. I do not recall that we had any lightning to speak of all that summer, and it was plenty hot at times. Also, there were not very many people roaming around in the hills.

On August 11, I rode to Choteau to meet the new Supervisor, Wm. H. Daug's and learned that a two-room log cabin was to be built at Patrick Bottom just below the forks of the North Fork; and I was to organize the job. The Supervisor gave me the plans and list of materials needed. I returned to Hannan in the rain, which it did all day.

The only source of sawed lumber in the Sun River-Dearborn area was White's sawmill on Smith Creek, a branch of Ford Creek. So I rode to Augusta, then to the sawmill, and ordered the roof sheathing, flooring, and finished lumber needed for the cabin, most of which had to be milled. Also arranged to have the material hauled to the building site. This took 4 days, and it rained every day of the trip. In fact, according to my diary, most of August was wet and cold.

Early in September, the lumber and other materials for the new cabin were being delivered, and this was no small chore. The men, two breeds, who had a ranch on Ford Creek, had contracted to deliver the lumber to the building site. They really earned their money. They used the bare running gears of two wagons with two four-horse teams; and, at some places, they used all eight head on one wagon. The old road, over which they were attempting to haul the lumber, had been built back in the 90's when the North Fork was logged for ties and bridge timbers for the construction of the "Turkey Track" railroad from Great Falls to Shelby and Canada. There had not been any reason or funds for doing any maintenance on the road since then. Most everybody who went into that area used packhorses to transport any needed equipment or supplies.

Guard Cunniff and I set up a camp on Patrick Bottom, near a good spring and scouted Medicine or Arsenic Creek for house logs. We selected fire-killed lodgepole which was sound and straight, and we had no difficulty in cutting suitable house logs, 30 feet long with 10-inch tops. The problem was to get them down to the building site, a distance of about 2 miles. We found an old abandoned mowing machine with axle and wheels in useable condition, fitted a tongue to it, and we had a rig that would handle two logs at a load.

Now, you are wondering where did these abandoned mowing machines come from, and how did they happen to be so handy for our use. Well, back in the 90's, a man named Cates homesteaded on the North Fork at a place now called Cates Park; and it was possible to put up native hay most any place. During the railroad logging on the North Fork, the mowers were used to put up hay to feed the workhorses used on the logging job. That's how come. They just were not worth hauling back out to the prairie.

Cunniff and W. E. Keller cut and skidded the house logs. Then Cunniff left us, as his appointment expired on September 30; and he wanted to get back to his father's ranch on the Dearborn. In addition to Keller, I also hired Sumner Franks and a man named Jones, who was camped at the Hot Springs, to work on the cabin. All three were experienced log workmen, especially Franks who scored each log on the inside face with the double-bitted axe. When the top log was in place, with the broad axe he hewed a flat smooth surface for the interior walls which gave them a very satisfying, not to say aesthetic, appearance to the cabin interior. The outside walls required no chinking as the logs, being smooth and straight, made a tight joint as they were laid up. A small amount of clay-daubing made the cracks airtight, and there was no shrinkage as with green timber. The first week of October was stormy, almost blizzard conditions, making work on the cabin rather difficult to carry on. On the 5th, we laid the corner stone for the cabin and moved the house logs into position alongside the site.

Oh yes, there is a story about the cabin location. When we, the construction crew and myself, first made camp at Patrick's, we all discussed where the cabin should be located from the standpoint of water, wood, drainage, wind and view. We had finally selected a clear grassy spot with good drainage, with wind protection from an aspen grove and located about 50 feet from a good flowing spring. The logs were decked alongside this spot. On September 22, Supervisor Daugs and a mining inspector named Booth rode into camp. The next day I guided Booth over to the Lange Creek mining claim, which he was to inspect. While I was away, Supervisor Daugs set a stake out in the middle of a windy flat and said, "Here's where we build the cabin."--without even looking at our selected spot! His site was 75 yards from the spring and without any windbreak, which is desirable in the Sun River Country where the wind blows at least half of the time. My guess was that Daugs just had to assert his authority. Anyway, we had to move the logs and other materials to the new site.

On October 8, I made my first contact with a Regional Office grazing inspector when I met Supervisor Daugs and C. H. Adams, of the Regional Office, at Elizabeth. We rode over the Deep Creek range, which was located at the north end of the Sun River Ranger District.



The "Golden Stairs" Sun River 1908.

Photo by author

Upon my return to Hannan, I found a large hunting party consisting of Mark Wellman, of Augusta; K. Pruitt; Doctors (veterinary) Barber, Sutphen, and Wm. Clark; and a cook from Helena in possession of my quarters--at my previous invitation, of course. Sunday morning the hunting party pulled out for the upper North Fork, and I rode with them to the Medicine Creek cabin. Incidentally, about 10 days later, when I returned to Hannan, I found that the hunting party had stopped on the way out and left me all the supplies left over from their trip, including about a dozen bottles, partly empty of Scotch, bourbon, several kinds of wine, etc. I lived pretty high for a while, at least.

I worked on the cabin construction with Keller and Jones until the next Saturday when I went out to Elizabeth to pack in some building supplies we were short of. Monday morning, I left Hannan leading a packhorse with building materials, including two rolls of tarpaper. The horse belonged to Sum Franks, and I did not know that he was broke to follow and hard to lead. Anyway, he did not lead very good; and eventually, I anchored him to the saddle horn with a couple half hitches and virtually dragged him up the trail. Although covered with water part of the year, there was--and still is, for that matter--a place on the trail just below Big George that we called the Golden Stairs. Here the trail went up over a sharp ridge of rock slide (see picture on page 30). The tread had been made by picking loose rocks out of the slide. In places, where the rocks were very large, a horse had to climb or jump up about 18 inches. At the foot of the slide, I met a hunting party from Choteau on the way out. One man was leading a string of horses loaded with meat, and four or five men were walking behind the horses. I stopped and visited with these men for a few minutes and then rode on. When we reached this particularly bad part of the trail, where the step up was about 18 inches high, Nancy sort of gathered herself and hopped up, or tried to. Just then, the packhorse decided he was not coming. Over and down we went, with my left leg under Nancy, and I was hanging out over the river some 50 or 60 feet below. I realized instantly that my only salvation was help from the men in the hunting party. So I yelled. Believe me, I yelled! The wind was blowing down the canyon, and they heard me. When they turned around and could see me hanging there, back they came, on the double. Three of them raised Nancy enough so the other man could help me get out from under and back on my feet. Then we untied the packhorse and helped the mare back on her feet. If the packhorse had not maintained his lead rope tight, the mare and I would most certainly have gone over into the river. Believe me, that was the last time I ever tied a lead horse to the saddle horn. Like the picketed packhorse incident, I learned the hard way, by experience. One of the men in the hunting party was I. G. Lestrude of Choteau who later worked with me in the Forest Service as a CCC foreman and camp superintendent. I went on to camp, not seriously hurt but badly "shaken" mentally.

By October 25, we had the cabin practically finished. We all pulled down to Hannan Gulch where I experienced another rude shock. During

the summer or early fall I had purchased a big bay saddle horse and was planning to use him as my winter horse. When I rode up the creek to run the horses into the corral, I rode around a bunch of high brush onto a small meadow-like area where the horses loved to feed, and there lay my prize saddle horse--dead with a bullet through him??? Some time later, in Choteau, I mentioned the horse by description and brand and learned that he had been stolen and had been missing for a year. The man who sold him to me disclaimed all knowledge, said he had bought the horse from a stranger. He was a liar because he knew every cow and horse brand in that country.

This was an election year. It was my first vote for President, so I rode out to Lane's ranch to register and to find a horse to replace the dead one. Made a swing around the south end of the district issuing free use permits for firewood and checking grazing conditions in general, with some miscellaneous visiting here and there. Made some winter preparations around Hannan and then rode to Choteau on November 3, voted for Teddy Roosevelt at the Elizabeth Post Office. Supervisor Daug's family--wife and child, were still in Kalispell. He was planning to bring them to Choteau, and I was to be Acting Supervisor while he was making the trip which would take a week or more. But first, he wanted to look over the District work and inspect the new cabin at Medicine Creek, which he did on November 6 and then he left for the Elk Creek Ranger Station on the Dearborn District. I reported to Choteau on November 11 and was on duty there until December 2, when I returned to Hannan via Augusta.

It occurs to me that our way of living and operating during the early days of the Forest Service would be of some interest to readers of this epistle who are accustomed to all the modern 20th Century means of living and operating.

When I left Kalispell, my equipment consisted of a regular stock saddle with a blanket and bridle and a saw buck packsaddle with a blanket and saddle pad, a pair of canvas alforjas (pack bags), a halter, and lead rope for the packhorse. Camp equipment, consisting of two long-handled fry pans, three tin plates, coffeepot, table knives, forks, and spoons, a marble hunting knife in scabbard, a .32 Special 1894 Winchester rifle with leather scabbard, my camp bed, and extra cloths, a yellow Fish brand slicker (raincoat to you) and a canvas pack cover 7 x 7.

My food supply consisted of a slab of Winchester bacon, 10 pounds flour, can baking powder, salt, sugar, canned tomatoes, corn, string beans and milk--three of each. This stuff made a packhorse load of about 180 pounds. It was packed in the alforjas which made two side packs for the pack horse, and the bed folded into a top pack with the canvas pack cover over it--rain and dust proof. Then I threw a diamond hitch (the one-man diamond which Jack Clack showed me) over the canvas cover, and we were ready to travel. The saddle horse

carried the rifle in a leather scabbard which hung from the saddle horn, my slicker, and me, which weighed around 175 pounds, more or less. About one-half of our time was spent in travel with this kind of an outfit. Each individual used his own variation according to personal ideas and desires.

Cooking was done over an open fire, and you soon became accustomed to a regular routine of setting up camp. First, the horses were unsaddled and turned out to graze. Maybe you hobbled them or picketed one and turned the others loose to graze. Then you rustled some dry wood, selected a place downwind for your campfire, and got the fire started. Then you set up camp. Most of us carried a 7 x 9 tent with 18-inch side walls; this was pitched in a convenient dry place. The bedroll was spread over fir boughs, if you were inclined to luxury. By that time, the fire had burned down to a good bed of coals (only tenderfeet attempt to cook over a blazing fire). You ate, washed dishes, smoked a pipe or two or a cigarette, took a good look at the horses and probably, just before bedding down, decided for various reasons--poor feed, stormy weather prospects--to catch the horses and tie them up for the night. For various reasons, known only to a horse, they will take off during the night; and you have a long walk to find them. Sometimes you don't find them for 3 or 4 days; that's hard on the legs, not to mention your temper. In the morning you start a fire, check the horses, fix breakfast, pack up, bring in the horses, saddle up, and you are on your way.

In those early days you probably spent an hour or two cutting logs out of the trail or just clearing the way to get through to where you wanted to go. That was the way you lived in the field, as it is sometimes referred to. Old Henry Waldref had a homemade sheet-iron folding stove that he packed with him. On a cold wet night, it would make a 7 x 9 tent almost luxurious living.

After I got established at Hannan, on trips away from the Station, I usually packed the two horses I started out with and rode Nancy. I used the canvas alforjas on one horse; on the other I used wooden pack boxes that in those days were used for shipping two 5-gallon tin cans of kerosene. They were just the right size for the purpose; and, when covered with canvas or rawhide, they were almost indestructible. All breakables, canned goods, kitchen tools and my sourdough can were packed in the wooden boxes, one of which was slung on each side of the pack horse. Oh yes, most of us packed a sourdough can with us at all times. Couldn't live without it!

Also, I packed a small tin reflector used for baking beside the campfire. The 7 x 9 tent made a top pack on one horse and the bed a top pack on the other packhorse. Tools, such as a double bit axe, a shovel, and a 3 1/2-foot one-man crosscut saw were packed on top of the pack cover where they were handy to get at when needed. Also,

with two packhorses, I packed oats for the horses which was a big help in holding horses around camp. I always gave them a small feed of oats when I caught them in the morning.

In 1908 prices for food supplies and related items ran about as follows:

6 cans milk.....\$.90	7 cans tomatoes..\$1.00	20 lb. sugar...\$1.50
6 pineapple..... 1.80	3 raspberries.... .75	1 ham..... 2.00
1 can cocoa..... .35	6 cans corn..... .75	6 doz. eggs... .90
4 string beans.. .60	12 milk..... 1.70	2 lb. coffee.. .80
3 pears..... .75	1 ham..... 2.25	12 can fruit... 2.75
3 lb. prunes.... .75	50 lb. flour..... 1.75	2 India relish .60
3 bx. raisins... .45	5 lb. prunes..... .50	4 lb. butter.. 1.40
1 bacon..... 1.05		

1 Luger .30 cal. pistol.....\$25.00	1 pr. riding boots.....\$10.85
1 box Luger shells..... 1.25	2 Union suits..... 8.00
2 box .32 cal. spec. shells. 1.50	3 pr. wool sox..... 8.00
4½ x 6½ Kodak film..... 2.80	3 pr. light sox..... .90
2 box 22 shells..... .50	1 pr. leather gloves.... 1.25
Horse shod, all four..... 2.00	1 hat, Stetson..... 4.50
100 lb. oats..... 1.00	Hotel room.....\$1.00/1.50
Horse in livery 1 night..... .50	Meals..... .50

One thing about Sun River was that there were no fish above the Sun River Canyon. So that item was not included in our diet except when we were over on Ford Creek. It was quite a few years after I left Sun River before any attempt was made to plant fish in the upper North Fork. There were plenty of deer in Hannan and Blacktail Gulches, and I had venison when it was legal to have it.

After my return to Hannan from the detail to the Supervisor's Office in Choteau, I got in a supply of firewood, put the station buildings in shape for the winter, brought in the tools from the new cabin and made general preparations for the winter. On December 13, I went on annual leave and traveled over to Kalispell where I spent the holidays. I was 24 years old, feeling my oats, and desirous of obtaining what I thought would be a more satisfactory arrangement insofar as my future in the Forest Service was concerned.

I wanted some experience and work with timber sales, particularly under conditions where I had someone to talk to besides my saddle horse and cat; and that's no reflection on old Tom, my cat. He surely was a friendly guy at all times, the only cat I ever saw that could kill a mountain pack rat. He hated dogs, period. And this is a good story, but I have to set the scene for it.

About 75 yards south of the cabin at Hannan was a fence across the gulch that made the whole canyon one big pasture. One gate post was a stump about 6 feet high and 18 inches in diameter. This was

one of Tom's favorite roosts--he could keep the whole canyon, from the river to the upper end, in view and hear every sound that was made within a mile or more. Whenever he heard horses crossing the creek below the gate, he would beat it for his favorite perch. If I was leading a packhorse, Tom would ride him to the cabin or barn, as the case might be. That was his way of saying he was glad I had come home. If I just had a saddle horse, he would hop onto the saddle, except Buck. He wouldn't stand for it; he bucked old Tom off a couple times.

One day Sum Franks rode into the station. Old Tom heard his horse ford the creek so he beat it for the gate post. Now Sum had a new young Airedale dog with him, the first one I ever saw. As Sum came through the gate, the dog was 40 or 50 yards behind, busy investigating everything on both sides of the road, and Tom sat perfectly still except that his tail was moving just a little. In a minute or two the Airedale came bustling along, cocky and full of "this is my world." As he passed the gate post, old Tom lit right in the middle of his back, raking the poor dog with all four feet and claws. The dog left the scene with considerable alacrity while searching his soul for a way to tell the world how scared he was. Old Tom quit him after a few jumps and headed for the cabin. I penned Tom in the old cabin where he sang himself to sleep. Sum finally caught his dog, but he had to tie him up until he was ready to leave. We were both sorry for the poor pup, but it was so funny that we had a good laugh anyway. The dog figured that Hannan was no place for him.

As a kitten, Old Tom had been taken to the Choteau cabins on Arsenic Creek and left there by a hunting party. For some reason or other, he had been desexed and grew to be extra large for his kind of pussy cat. He spent two or three winters at the cabin alone and learned how to take care of himself in a setting of the survival of the fittest. When A. C. McCain came to the District, he had moved Tom down to Hannan as a pet for his children.

Tom hated a whistle sound, and just to tease him, I would lay on my back on the bed and start to whistle. Tom would stand it about so long, then he would jump on the bed and position himself on my chest. He would bring his nose right down to my lips as much as to say "Quit it." Eventually, he would put his paw over my lips with the claws extended just a little bit; and if I didn't stop, he would keep applying pressure until I had to stop. Then he would sit there and purr louder and louder, so pleased with himself. Some cat!

While in Kalispell, I approached Supervisor Bunker about a transfer to the Flathead with the possibility of some timber sale work. However, I received very little encouragement and was somewhat put out about the seeming indifference I received to my request. What I really wanted, though, was to be closer to a certain young lady in whom I was very much interested.

The 1908-09 winter was one of those that Montana is somewhat famous for (or would notorious be a better word?). I left Kalispell on January 4, on Great Northern Train No. 2, running several hours late. By the time we reached Shelby a real blizzard was howling out of the north. I missed the Helena train at Great Falls and had to lay over a day until the morning of the 6th. Then the Helena train ran late and I missed the stage at Craig and had to lay over another day until the 7th. Temperatures were in the low 30's and 40's, and the wind blew some. During the night the wind died down, which helped. The four-horse stage left Craig at 8 a.m. with three passengers and the driver.

On the hill going down into the Dearborn River crossing, the right front wheel hit a rut and the axle broke off at the wheel hub, and there we were. The driver decided to take the team to a ranch we could see about a mile away and see if he could borrow some kind of a sled or wagon. He asked me to stay with the mail, and the Indian woman passenger decided to stay on the stage, too. Her husband was lightly dressed and had no overcoat or overshoes. He decided to start walking toward the half-way house, about 5 or 6 miles ahead. If he could keep moving he could keep from freezing. This couple lived on a ranch on Ford Creek and had been up in Canada visiting relatives. Weather did not bother them very much. In about an hour or so the driver was back with a sled, a box on sled runners. In Pennsylvania we would have called it a pung. Anyway, we reached the half-way house about 2 hours late.

The stage on the north end of the trip was a bobsled with a box full of straw and lots of robes. The driver was Chet Nixon whom I knew very well. The team was four good horses which could make good time, which we did until we hit the big flat south of the river at Augusta. The flat is 3 or 4 miles across, and by the time we reached it, the wind had come up and was blowing out of the north. The wind had blown the snow across the road so the driver could not tell where the road was, and the horses almost balked at having to face the wind. The Indian got out of the sleigh and said he would walk in the ruts so the driver could see where to go. We finally got to Augusta about 8 o'clock, more than 3 hours behind schedule.

On January 8, 9, and 10, the storm continued with 25° to 40° below zero temperatures. On the 11th I got Nancy in from the pasture and had her shod with Neverslip shoes. The next morning, around 20° below, I saddled up, and with Sum Franks, rode out for Elizabeth P.O. and Hannan. We crossed the river on the ice at the Christian Ranch and stayed there for the night. The 13th was too stormy to move so we stayed by the stove, and I reported to Supervisor Daug's over the telephone.

We started early the morning of the 14th and headed for Elizabeth Post Office and then rode on in to Hannan about 6:30 p.m. There was 2 feet of snow on the level. Riding across the head of Wagner

Basin, Franks was in the lead breaking trail and about 50 feet ahead of me on Nancy. Just as we crossed what appeared to be a rough spot in the snow, a snowslide broke off right at Nancy's heels and shot down to the river about a thousand feet below us. It was too close to be scared, so we just rode on.

It took me 2 days to get the rest of the horses into the corral. They were up the creek on a grassy hillside which the wind had swept fairly clear of snow--fat and in heel-kicking shape.

When I talked to Supervisor Daus on the 13th, I told him I had decided to resign and return to Kalispell. On January 23, Ranger Le Breches arrived at Hannan; and on January 24, 1909 I turned the District over to him and left. Thus ended the first episode.