

THE ATHABASKA VALLEY

"Our drive this morning will take us along sixty five miles of the Jasper-Banff highway. For the first twenty miles of the trip we will follow along the Athabaska river, then take up the Whirlpool river for a few miles, and for the remaining part of the trip we will be following the Sunwapta river which has its origin at the Athabaska glacier. But right now looking over to your left you may see one of the best distance views of Mt. Edith Cavell. This is one of the tallest peaks in the park, having an altitude of 11,033 feet above sea level. We have now passed through Jasper town and towering up to our left we can see Signal Mt. and Mt. Tekara, the first deriving its name from the fact that the Indians who inhabited this section of the valley many years ago actually used its peak for signalling to other tribes in the valley. Tekara is named after an Indian guide who aided David Thompson, a famous explorer, through the Athabaska valley. Athabaska is also an Indian name meaning "valley of green trees". It has been well named for the whole valley is covered with evergreens."

On talking with our driver-guide we find that this trip leaves daily from the lodge, and is a must for all who visit the lodge. The bus leaves early in the morning and returns late in the afternoon. We find the buses quite comfortable and to insure the tourists of not missing anything the top of the bus is made of plexi-glass which enables good vision from any position in the bus.

Once in a while a tourist may venture a question such as: "Driver, how deep is that mountain?" The driver usually replies with a grin and some plausible answer. At the first opportunity while careening around a switch-back the driver usually gets back by saying, "Don't worry folks, if anyone gets scared on these switch-backs, why just shut your eyes like I do". Having evened the score he will once more resume his "spiel" with, "directly ahead of you is Mt. Hardesty".

Just as Mt. Hardesty disappears from view the road goes through a series of curves and hills and we then find ourselves at the Athabaska Falls. This is one of the highlights of the trip for here the Athabaska takes a drop of seventy feet into a jagged gorge which throws the water surging out into the valley below. Immediately behind the falls rises Mt. Kerkeslin with its ice capped peak making this spot a cameraman's paradise. As the driver allows us only about ten minutes here, we venture further on up the

valley to the "Athabaska Look Out". This stop, if you are lucky, is not only noted for the beautiful view of the valley and sharply rising peaks of Mt. Fryatt and Saddle Mountain, but more for the mountain goats and sheep which are often seen at this natural salt-lick.

From here we proceed on through the valley of "The Seven Peaks" and find ourselves coming to a stop at the Sunwapta Inn. After purchasing a few refreshments we take a spur road down to the Sunwapta Falls. Sunwapta means "turbulent waters," and this describes the scene perfectly. Here the water, after being split into two segments by an island, drops down into a gorge, which carries the raging waters safely out into the peaceful Athabaska Valley.

The road now winds its way between two mountain ranges. On the left is the "Razor-Back" range and to the right is the "Sawtooth Range" both having altitudes of about 10,000 feet. At the end of the ranges we pass over "Pobokton Creek" another Indian word meaning "Owl" and to our left is seen "Pobokton Peak". This is an interesting scene, for many years ago the whole peak dropped off spreading boulders of all sizes and colours across the floor of the valley.

In the distance we can now see Mt. Wilcox, named after one of the early explorers who was with the party at the time of the discovery of the Sunwapta pass and summit.

We are now beginning the long climb of 3,000 feet in three miles of road to the top. This summit is the second highest point on the Jasper-Banff highway being 7,100 feet above sea level. From this vantage point we can see the beautiful snow-capped peaks of Snow-Dome range. The ice-cap on this range is about 250 feet in thickness, giving a slight impression of the size of the icefields. Looking down the sheer sides of the Range we can see the Sunwapta river pencil-lining its way through the time worn pass. Descending from the top of the summit, and in a very few minutes, we find ourselves at the tongue of the Columbia Icefield, better known as the Athabaska glacier.

The Icefield proper covers an area estimated to be 150 square miles, but the section we are now viewing is about four miles long and reaching depths of over 300 feet. At present the glacier is thought to be receding at the rate of about 66 feet per year. One of the striking peculiarities that everyone notices is the intense blue of

the ice. This also represents the climax of glacial ice deposits in the Canadian Rockies.

Here the tourists, who had long been looking forward to their visit in the Canadian Rockies, are permitted to leave the bus and to walk up on to the glacier. This is the end of their trip—an experience that is truly breathtaking.

—MIKE MYLES '51

SPRING

Round-a-whirl, skips the fond fun-seeking child,
 Gay stripling of bright spring-sun welcomers,
 Wantonly wandering over the hill-side wild,
 Calling, robin-like, playmates of past summers.
 And winter-sullened sod
 Awakens from snow-laden bond
 And spreads daisies before earth-visiting God.

Field-weary, farmers o'er fall-furrows go;
 Streams, mud-coloured, flood their mossy banks,
 The thrust-singing echoes from a fir-wooded row,
 Praising, men's hearts beat rhythmic-sung-thanks
 To the spring-season-Giver;
 And chants of tree-top singers
 Heavenly-hymn-like, resound, "Praise to Him forever!"

—GEORGE KEEFE '51

NO CLUES

Have you ever pondered nervously at your desk the night before an examination? Have you ever attempted to concentrate on some philosophical thesis? Or have you ever undertaken the exhausting task of preparing for four exams in one night without having a clue as to what any one of them was about? If your answer is yes, you certainly have undergone a rather disheartening experience.

One Sunday evening after returning from Benediction I flopped into a chair, took out my philosophy, and started to memorize the scheme for the derivation of the predicaments. I had only derived three with seven more to go when the door burst open.