

TOM DAWSON — MOUNTAIN MAN

Glacier National Park in Montana

Each year since 1932, Great Northern Railway calendars have been colorful, lifelike reproductions of portraits of Blackfeet Indians by the celebrated artist, Winold Reiss. The 1950 calendar is a departure from tradition, for it presents Mr. Reiss' excellent portrait of Tom Dawson, Mountain Man, who has lived for more than 50 years in the region known as Glacier National Park in Northwestern Montana.

Son of Andrew Dawson, Scottish fur-trader known as "The King of the Missouri," Tom was born in 1862 in the famous old Upper Missouri river town of Fort Benton, Montana.

Tom's long life has been both varied and colorful. He was a youthful adventurer, a sailor, a builder, a farmer, a Canadian Mountie, an early explorer of what is now Glacier National Park, and later a guide to distinguished engineers, naturalists, railway builders and others.

Tom's father took him to Scotland at an early age, and when his father died in 1871, the son went to live with an uncle who sent him to school in a small town near Edinburgh. After leaving school, the lad was apprenticed to a shipbuilder. Upon completion of his apprenticeship, the boy sailed the seas as a ship's mechanic.

Tom never forgot the land of his birth and the Western country that he loved; so he returned, first taking up metal work in New York and smaller Eastern cities before heading West.

Instead of returning directly to Montana, his trail led first to the Midwest, where he engaged briefly in

farming, to Winnipeg, and then to McLeod, Canada, and real adventure. Becoming a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Dawson was instrumental in helping quell the most exciting uprising in the history of Alberta, the Riel rebellion, instigated by Louis Riel, a notorious rascal, whose followers numbered mainly ne'er-do-well soldiers of fortune and renegade Indians. Riel, who once hid out in what is now the St. Mary Lake district of Glacier National Park, finally was hanged for treason in Regina.

After his thrilling and venturesome McLeod experiences, Tom, longing for the place he called home, returned to Montana and to Old Agency, then the seat of government for the Blackfeet.

Here Tom and Joe Kipp, another famous plainsman and trader, established a general store. Together they built the first sawmill on the upper Dupuyer Creek. They made many trips together into the uncharted recesses of the mountain region that became Glacier National Park in 1910.

Glacier Park became his permanent home in the late eighties, and there he has remained ever since. He helped make the first survey of the park region and worked for Major W. R. Logan, the park's first superintendent, and for whom Logan Pass on spectacular Going-to-the-Sun highway is named.

He was a guide for many notable park visitors: James J. Hill and Louis W. Hill, the Earl of Dudley, the Behring Brothers, British bankers; Dr. Ly-

man Beecher Sperry, after whom Sperry Glacier is named, and Henry L. Stimson, former Secretary of State and War.

Tom is a natural story-teller who gives his listeners mental images of places and incidents, balanced with wry quips and humorisms. Dates of the more important events come quickly to his agile mind. His mental faculties, in his late eighties, are alert and more keen than those of many men scores of years younger. His mental and physical reserve has been built up by a life of vigorous activity, and an enthusiasm for the mountains and the prairies of his homeland.

Glacier National Park lies on the main transcontinental line of the Great Northern Railway. During the operating season of hotels and chalets, from June 15 through September 15, Blackfeet Indians, clad in colorful deerskin and bead costumes, greet and entertain visitors with traditional tribal dances and ceremonies.

Inquiries about vacations in Glacier National Park are invited by the Passenger Traffic Manager, Great Northern Railway, St. Paul 1, Minnesota.

Portfolios including 24 reproductions in full color of Winold Reiss' famous Blackfeet Indian portraits, and an authentic history of the tribe, are available from the St. Paul Book and Stationery Company, St. Paul 1, Minnesota, and at leading book stores in many cities.