

Field Tripping
in
Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park
July 2-5, 2015



Weary of renovating home and properties in The Mighty Holy Schoonover Empire, we pointed the Ricemobile at Alberta's Rockies and stomped on it.



Canada's Waterton is a small national park - but one of the most beautiful. I fell in love with it instantly.



The classic view while The Dragon Lady does her De Niro "You talkin' to me?" routine. She looks tough but don't worry. She really has a heart as soft as *ojiya*, or rice porridge.



The iconic Prince of Wales Hotel built in 1927.



Why societies kowtow, revere and bestow all kinds of honours on these do nothings I'll never understand. The only thing they've "achieved" is having been born to descendents of murderous tyrants.



Built Swiss chalet style, it's a national heritage site.





We were here for a field trip led by Nat Rutter in the red sweater. Nat's chair emeritus of the geology department at the University of Edmonton and the recipient of some 30 honours

including the Order of Canada and a fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada. He's also director of the Prairie-NWT Region of the Canadian chapter of The Explorers Club, where he's made a significant contribution over the last 11 years.



Waterton is unique. Imagine a massive slab of 1.5 billion-year-old pre-Cambrian land 100 miles to the southwest that has been pushed here by plate tectonics, riding up and over now underlying much younger Cretaceous rock. Life in the pre-Cambrian consisted largely of single celled organisms; the Cretaceous was the Age of Dinosaurs. The Cambrian saw the first explosion of varied life that left recognizable fossils, such as seen at the famous Burgess Shale site a couple hundred miles away. Nat's on that board too, incidentally.



Grandpa! The world's oldest fossil - a stromatolite - which we can thank for converting CO₂ to O₂. This example is among a row of interesting rocks outside the hotel. Stromatolites are up to 3.5 billion years old. The planet is only a billion years older.



The pre-Cambrian rock is limestone and its cousins and was laid down in seas well over a billion years ago. The folding here at Cameron Falls is clear.



As it is here just above water level left of center. This example was so definitive it was used by *National Geographic* when they did a shoot of the park. The park is also unique in several other ways: it has examples of flora found nowhere else in the Rockies and records the most snow and wind.



A dried and cracked beach 1.5 billion years old.



Nearby ripples in the sand. Now solid rock.



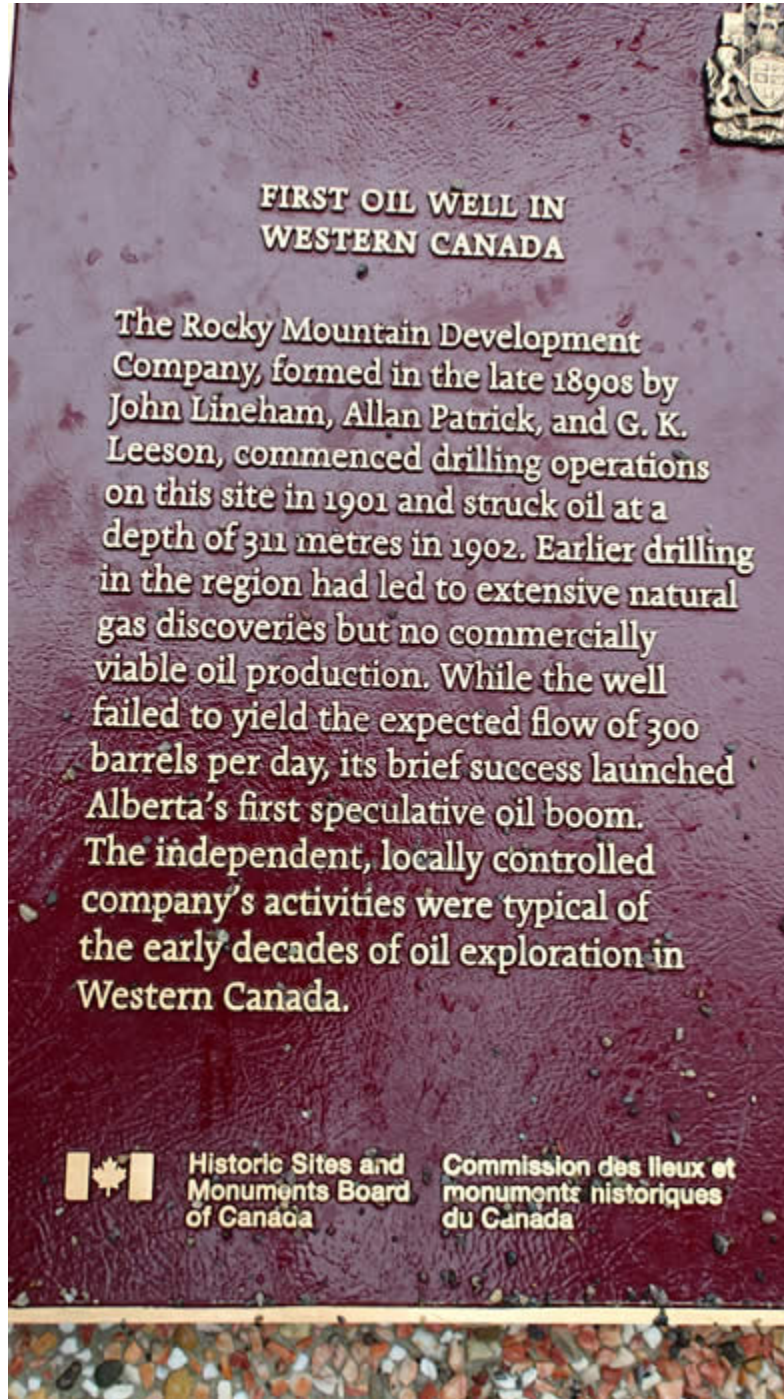
Red Rock Canyon. The argillite (a fine grained cousin of limestone) when exposed to O₂ in shallow seas oxidized the iron and it turned red. When it's white or green, O₂ wasn't present.



Nature is always the best artist.



Bears rolling in oil seepage drew the attention of early speculators.





It wasn't all geology, as fascinating as it is to me. Nat invited his old friend, Barney Reeves, to join us. Barney is emeritus professor of archaeology at the University of Calgary and was brought up in Waterton. No one knows it better. In fact, he's mayor. That's Chicken Legs on the right.



Buffalo jump. It was a revelation to us when he pointed out that the prairies were far more bald during the days when millions of buff roamed because they'd nip off the budding aspen/poplar trees.



I showed him this image of an unusual point (its haft is stemmed, while most are side notched) from the Hutton Site at Candle Lake. Claude and his son David found it there on a beach decades ago, Claude being a fellow Carrot River lad. Another hometown boy and now arguably the province's leading archaeologist, Professor David Meyer, and others have dated it to 8,200-7,500 years ago. David found two others near our home town, and there's only been 11 found in Saskatchewan. There's a thin scatter of them throughout the plains of Canada and US. Barney recognized it immediately - "Swan River chert. Cody Complex." - and said he had discovered them at Waterton as well, which he pushes back even further, to 10,500 years ago. The familiar side notched arrowheads are much younger, as recent as 400 years old. He generously offered to send me his most recent book which is on the Cody Complex, and I look much forward to opening it.



His most fascinating research has to do with spirit quest locations. He and a late colleague discovered innumerable stone circles, semi-circles, crude chairs and the like atop mountains and high ridges where Natives retreated to fast and seek visions. Most fascinating, all were within sight of power peaks such as the Sweetgrass Hills of Montana.



We also cruised in this classic 1927 steamer down the length of the lake to the US and Glacier Park side for a walkabout. We didn't stay long because they allow stark raving mad lunatics to wander free on the streets down there. They call themselves the Republican Party.





You can see the hotel in the distance as we retreat to safety and sanity.



Our two Asians having decided on a recipe, The Dragon Lady distracts the owner while Good Yoko naps the dog.



Actually, having eaten dog several times in the Philippines, I'm not fond of it. It's a very coarse meat, and even puppy is too fatty to be tasty. There's nothing better than Bambi.



I thought I was pretty good at nicking names. They're pretty good down here themselves.



This is reminiscent of a sign I get a kick out of and which is frequently seen in Saskatchewan: "Slow children playing." And we'll finish with this next one. If ever there was a truism, it's this.
Just ask any woman....



MEN



TO THE LEFT

BECAUSE

WOMEN



ARE ALWAYS

RIGHT!