

White Grass Ranch celebrates its 60th

By V. WEIDENKOPF

With fireworks, food and fireworks, a multitude of friends joined Frank and Nora Cabry on the 4th of July to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the White Grass ranch.

Invited for its beautiful setting at the foot of the Teton, the White Grass is the oldest operating dude ranch in Jackson Hole.

It was 1913 when Harold Hammond and Tucker Slogdun registered adjoining 160 acre homesteads and formed a partnership in the ranching business. They named the ranch "White Grass," a term used by the Indians to describe the sage that covered the meadows.

Hammond, a native of Blueford, Idaho, had come here as a horse wrangler and worked with stock used in constructing the original Jackson Lake Dam. Slogdun, a Philadelphia and full fledged dude ranch operator in Philadelphia, Pa., and Slogdun's brother, who was operating the Bar BC ranch, at partners they ran the White Grass solely as a cattle ranch until 1919 when they took in their first dude.

A hypertensive brother, described in the modern business encyclopedia of the ranch, was circulated in the Philadelphia area.

"Accommodations on this ranch for guests in the number of acres as follows," read the brochure, and amounted for three cabins and a large tent, "quite separate from the ranch's buildings where the operators and workmen live."

A good cook, a woman to look after the cabins, a wrangler and "a good library," were listed in the ranch offering. Slogdun was apparently eager to attract outsiders to the White Grass. "It is the wish of the owners to make this ranch especially agreeable to men who wish to continue their studies on their reading while leading a ranch life," the brochure continued. "The dry climate and easy way of living make the best possible conditions for building up physical and nervous strength." For those that might harbor some doubts, they added, "there is a good doctor and a hospital with modern equipment at Jackson."

Travel to Jackson Hole was not considered a problem. "An easy fare from Philadelphia to Tyler, Idaho, cost \$52, and from there guests were transported by a ranch vehicle over "the new highway" (Teton Pass) across the mountains. "In summer one can do this comfortably in three or four hours."

Plans for guests, including on-chest use of a horse and laundry, were set at \$5 a week, a fairly high price in those days. Dudes stayed a long time and the White Grass offered incentives for extended visits. "A reduction will be made for anyone who wishes to make a stay longer than three months," the brochure stated.

Hunting and pack trips were especially arranged, "and when his ranch work permits, Mr. Hammond acts as trail guide."

During that first summer in 1913 a family who were guests at the Bar BC visited the White Grass. The young widow, Marjorie Cabry, and her four children (including two-year-old Frank, named in the ranch that fall to go hunting with Harold Hammond, instead of returning home to Philadelphia after the hunt they stayed until Christmas.

Marjorie and the children continued to divide their time during summers with visits at the Bar BC and the White Grass.

With her children finally grown, Marjorie Cabry married Harold Hammond in 1926.

Slogdun at this time sold his interest in the Hammonds and moved to the Three Rivers ranch, along with Slogdun's brother who had quit the dude business to devote more time to writing.

With hunting, ranching and dudes to look after, Hammond was a busy man. However he thought that there must be some advantage in having long, cold winters and in the late '20s decided to raise Silver Fox. Five fox pelts were much in demand and concentrated on fine breeding stock. "The first pup body and sold together during the depression," he remembered later.

After just two years of marriage, Hammond died in the middle of the deep winter of 1930. Frank Cabry, a 21 year old student in Princeton University, took over management of the ranch.

Frank continued as manager until the summer of 41. "I missed the noble style" one of the Hammonds, recalls Frank. "In two hours borrowed from Dave had I was back down." "The next day he entered the Army Air Force and was a test pilot during the war. He returned in 1945 with wife Olga and daughter Cynthia and bought a half share in the ranch.

Three years later Marjorie Hammond died of her water issue in Jackson.

Sherman Miller, a Philadelphia who had been a dude at the ranch, bought Marjorie Hammond's interest and became a partner for two continued on page 8.



The late Marjorie Hammond. Her husband Harold discovered a high mountain lake in the Teton and named it (Marjorie Lake) after her.



Dudes arriving from the rail-head at Victor.



Wrangler and guide, Harold Hammond



Dude tent in 1922. The tent is still the heart of the ranch operation.

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