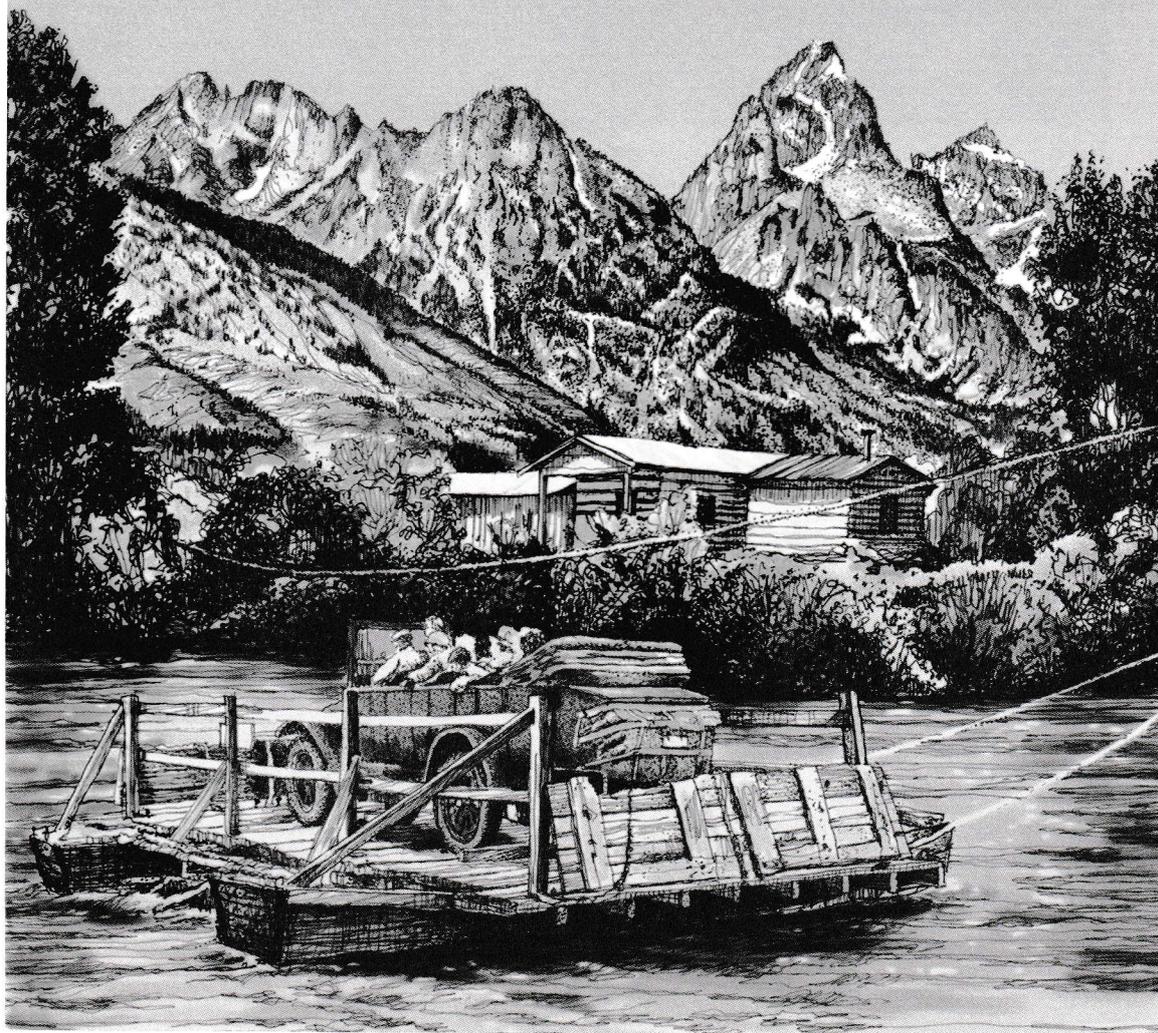
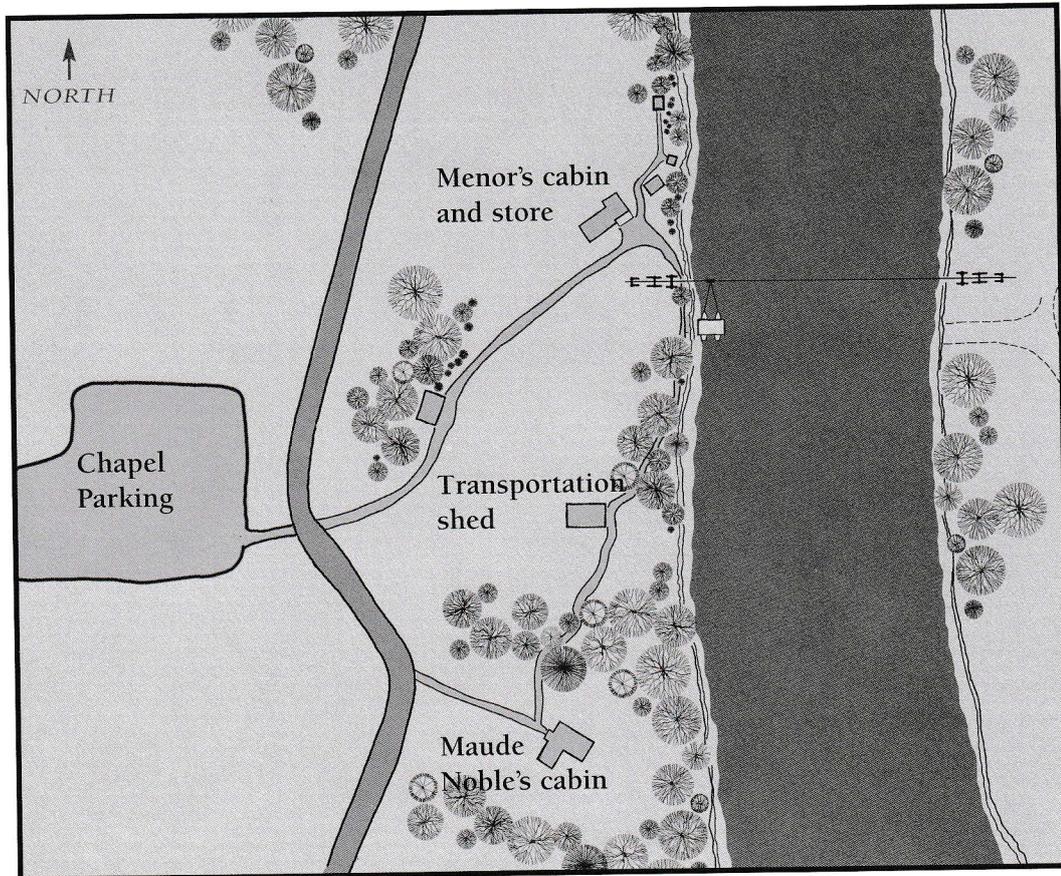


Menor's Ferry Historic District

GUIDE AND MAP





Begin the self-guided trail by proceeding ahead and bearing left along the path towards the white building. Watch for vehicles as you cross the gravel road.

The ferry boat runs intermittently in the summer months.

The ground you are standing on once belonged to William D. Menor. He came to the valley in 1894 and took up this homestead beside the Snake River. Here he constructed a ferry which became a vital crossing for the early settlers of this valley called Jackson Hole.

In addition to the existing white-washed cabin, general store, storage shed and smokehouse, the Menor homestead once included barns, a blacksmith shop, a garden, and irrigated hayfields and pastures.

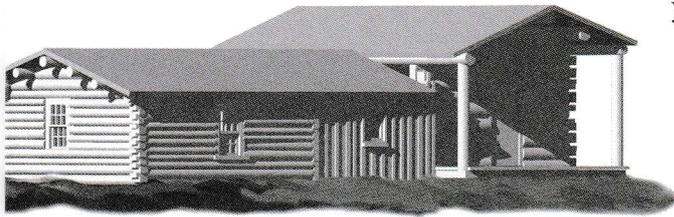
JACKSON HOLE was so isolated by its surrounding mountains and had such a harsh climate that it was one of the last areas of the lower 48 states to be settled.

Homesteaders came here mainly from Idaho starting in the late 1880s. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed citizens to claim 160 acres of federal land. Homesteaders secured final title ("proved up") by living on and improving the property or cultivating it for five years, then paying the fifteen dollar fee. Bill Menor chose a slightly different method, squatting on 149 acres and eventually securing legal title in 1908.

Most early settlement in the valley took place in the south or on a few scattered areas with fertile soil, such as the Cunningham ranch to the northeast. Menor was alone on the west bank of the Snake River for more than ten years, his nearest neighbors being in the area later known as Mormon Row, east of Blacktail Butte. Two men from Idaho, James May and James Budge, claimed the first homesteads there, and actually crossed the river on Menor's Ferry on their way to securing a homestead.

The west bank of the Snake in Menor's neighborhood was not heavily homesteaded until the advent of dude ranching. After meeting Bill's brother Holiday Menor while on a visit, Evelyn Dornan homesteaded next to him. Her descendants still own the land and run the tourist-related businesses across the river.

WHITE-WASHED CABIN. The building before you is the original homestead cabin of Bill Menor.



Bill Menor's cabin

Portions of the building look different because the cabin was constructed in three phases. Menor built the west wing in 1894 (the Tetons are to the west). Around 1895, he added the frame central wing. The larger east wing was built around 1905. The west wing served as a bedroom and sitting room, while the central wing housed the kitchen and pantry. Menor opened a store in the east wing where settlers and travelers could purchase tobacco, coffee, tea, sugar, flour, canned foods and some items of clothing. The store, ferry and blacksmith shop served as a means of earning cash, in addition to the subsistence living Bill Menor practiced on his homestead.

Except for a few items such as glass and nails, pioneers used local materials to construct shelters. Abundant stands of nearby lodgepole pine provided a convenient source of lumber. The rough-sawn boards of the central wing indicate the presence of a sawmill in the valley around 1895. Menor painted his cabin with a lime-based white-wash. He obtained the lime from his brother, Holiday Menor, who had a homestead across the river. Holiday Menor quarried lime from Blacktail Butte and prepared it in a kiln near the east landing of the ferry.

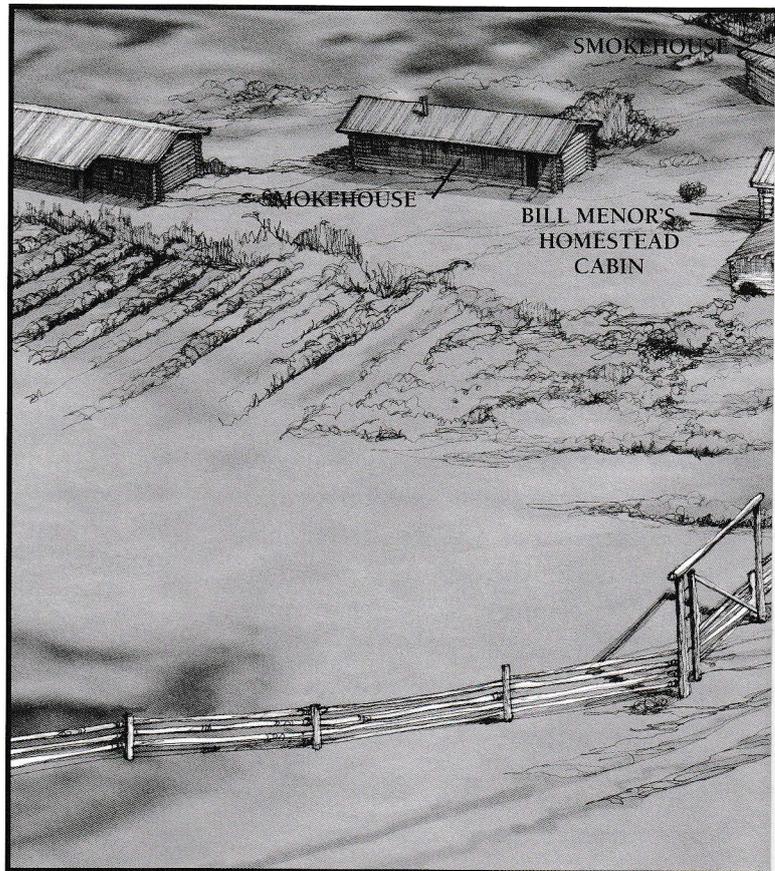
The short growing season and isolation of Jackson Hole forced settlers to store large amounts of food supplies, some bought, some raised. One large homesteading family bought a thousand pounds of flour each year during their annual trip to Idaho Falls. During much of the winter, snow made travel difficult, if not impossible. Even in warmer seasons, transporting supplies and mail was slow, time-consuming work.

STOREHOUSES such as this one were common on many homesteads. Under the building, a cold cellar provided a cool, dark place to store root crops. Smoked, dried and canned goods were stored on the main floor. The smokehouse is located just north of the storehouse. Menor hunted elk and deer and raised some farm animals for meat. He preserved meat by suspending it over a slow, smoky fire inside the windowless smokehouse.

Menor dug a well near the Snake River because he could draw water from the well even during spring run-off when the river was murky. He diverted water from Cottonwood Creek, more than one mile north of here, to irrigate his garden. The snow-capped mountains and forest watershed guaranteed an adequate supply of water.

Ranching and farming was risky for Bill Menor and his neighbors. Dry summers, rocky soils, and a growing season in Jackson Hole of less than 60 frost free days per year made agriculture a marginal proposition. *Stroll down to the boat dock.*

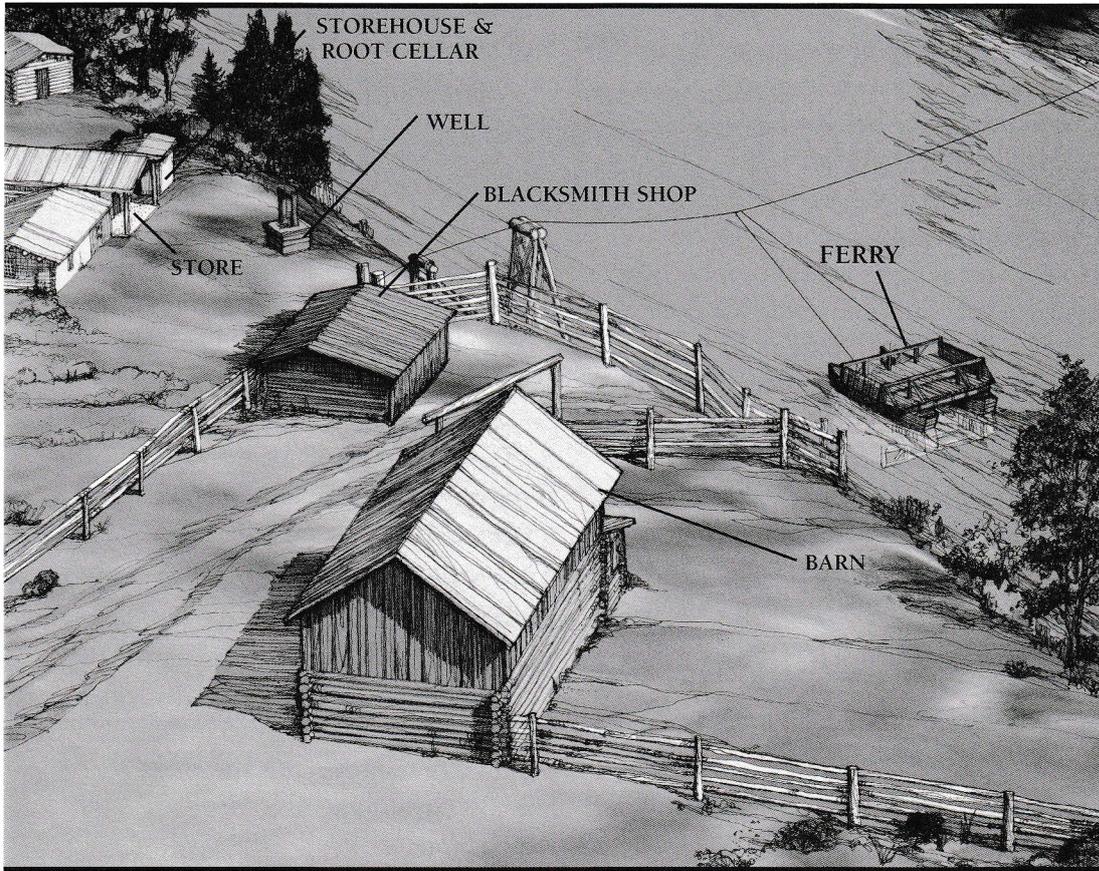
RIVERS are often important transportation routes. However, the Snake River was a natural barrier that divided Jackson Hole. Most settlers, especially before 1900, lived on the east side of the river. In dry months the river could be forded safely in



MENOR'S HOMESTEAD AS

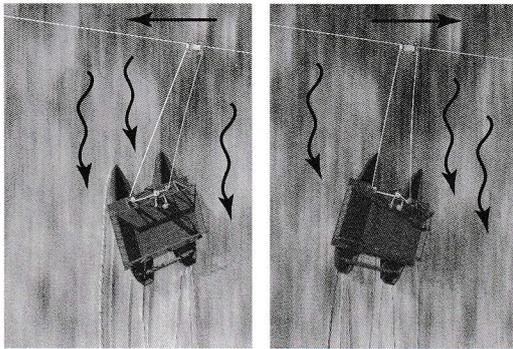
several locations, but during periods of high water even the most reliable fords were impassable. After 1894, Menor's Ferry became the main crossing in the central part of Jackson Hole. Residents crossed on the ferry to hunt, gather berries and mushrooms, and cut timber at the foot of the mountains. Bill Menor built the original ferry and cableworks. Today's ferry and cableworks are replicas.

THE FERRY is a simple platform set on two pontoons. The cable system keeps the ferry from going downstream, but lets it move sideways. By turning the pilot wheel,



IT MAY HAVE LOOKED IN THE EARLY 1900'S

the rope is tightened and points the pontoons toward the opposite bank. The pressure of the current against the pontoons pushes the ferry across the river.



This type of ferry existed in ancient times and was used elsewhere in the United States.

Menor charged 50 cents for a wagon and team and 25 cents for a rider and horse. Pedestrians rode free if a wagon was crossing. When the water was too low for the ferry, Menor suspended a platform from the pulley, and three to four passengers could ride a primitive cablecar across the river. In later years, Menor and his neighbors built a bridge for winter use, dismantling it each spring.

THE TRANSPORTATION SHED

houses a collection of wagons and coaches representing frontier transportation. The settlement of Jackson Hole was accomplished before paved highways and modern vehicles. Covered wagons brought families full of hope to a new home in Jackson Hole. Other wagons hauled supplies and mail. Imagine a couple riding the Peter Hansen buggy home from an all night dance. Or picture early visitors in the yellow coaches bumping over dusty, rutted roads to the valley's first dude ranches, the JY and the Bar BC. Think about moving logs with this primitive set of axles or riding for hours in this exposed buggy.

Harsh though it is, Jackson Hole has always been admired for its beauty and unique character, even by early settlers. And as travel vacations became more common and transportation improved, many settlers realized that the rugged scenery, wildlife and romantic notions of the "Old West" attracted visitors to Jackson Hole. More and more

tourists came here to spend a portion of their summer in the idyllic setting, clean air, and scenery of the Tetons. Ranches shifted from raising cattle to providing bed, board, and amusement to vacationers, and a new era of "dude ranching" began. The natural resources were still the attraction, but the tourists provided the livelihood.

Menor sold out to Maude Noble in 1918. She doubled the fares, hoping to earn a living from the growing number of tourists in the valley. Noble charged \$1 for automobiles with local license plates, or \$2 for out-of-state plates.

THE NOBLE CABIN was moved from the east side of Cottonwood Creek in 1918 when Maude Noble purchased the Menor homestead. With a partner named Frederick Sandell, she ferried increasing numbers of visitors across the Snake River. She also ran a store, called the Ferry Ranch Store.



Maude Noble operating the ferry



Maude Noble's cabin

In 1927, a steel truss bridge was built just south of the ferry, making it obsolete. Maude Noble sold the property to the Snake River Land Company in 1929.

ONE EVENING IN 1923, a group of local residents met with Horace Albright, then Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, to discuss their concerns over commercial development in the Teton country. Albright was an ardent conservationist, which may have stemmed from his hometown experience watching the Owens River completely diverted to supply Los Angeles with water. With more tourists came more facilities to serve them. Commercialization of the valley threatened to destroy the quality of the scenery and wildlife habitat that brought people to Jackson Hole.

The alarmed meeting participants discussed ways of saving the valley from tawdry exploitation. They agreed that some sort of preserve would be necessary to protect the "Old West" character of the valley, though their concept of the preserve was different from a National Park. The group decided to seek a wealthy individual who would be willing to buy private land to donate to the preserve. That meeting took place in Maude Noble's cabin.

In 1926, Superintendent Albright met John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and aroused Mr. Rockefeller's interest in saving the valley.

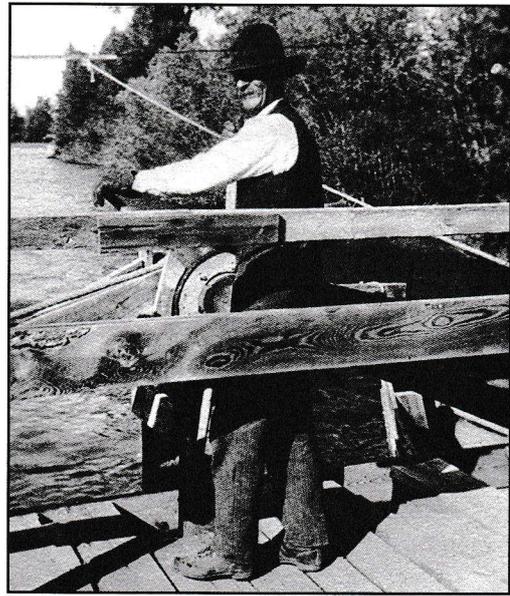
Rockefeller described the Tetons as "quite the grandest and most spectacular mountains I have ever seen...a picture of ever changing beauty which is to me beyond compare." Through the Snake River Land Company, Rockefeller provided money to purchase private land for future donation to the federal government.

Meanwhile, Congress created Grand Teton National Park in 1929. The first park included the Teton mountain range and the glacial lakes at the foot of the mountains. In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation creating Jackson Hole National Monument. The monument consisted of federal land in the valley. In 1949, Rockefeller donated over 32,000 acres to the Department of the Interior. Congress established the present park in 1950 which included the 1929 park, the national monument and the Rockefeller donation. Walk through the entrance gate in front of the Noble Cabin and follow the paved path towards the small log chapel.

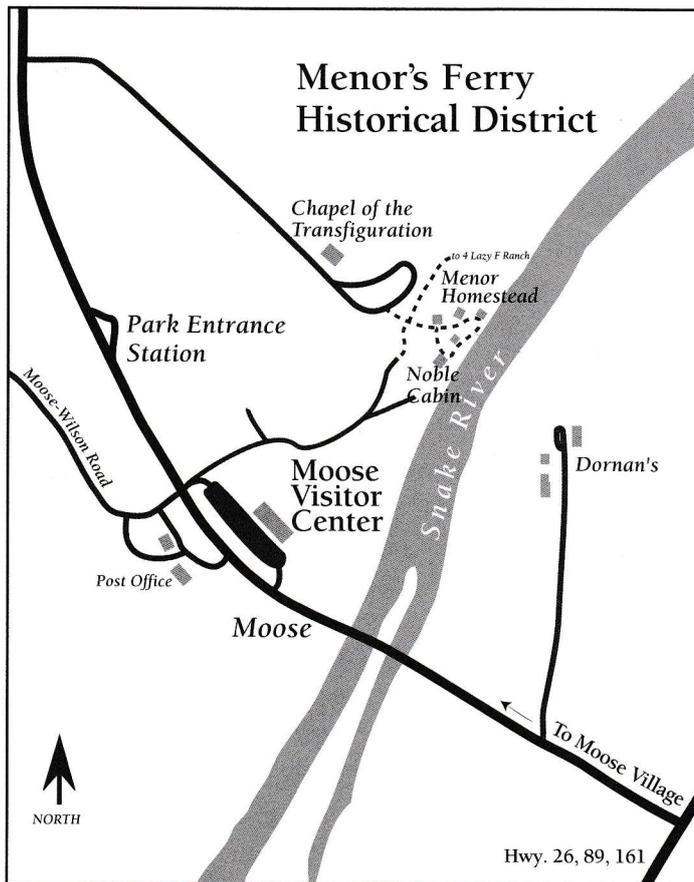
THE CHAPEL OF THE TRANSFIGURATION sits on land donated by Maude Noble. Early on it served as a location for summer services attended by local residents and numerous guests at surrounding dude ranches. Sometimes more than 100 horses could be seen corralled next to the chapel on Sunday

morning. Mock ambushes and other high jinks often took place as folks traveled to the chapel from the various ranches. The services were an important dude ranch tradition during the 1920s and 1930s. The chapel is owned and operated by St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson. It remains a house of worship today.

Bill Menor and his neighbors homesteaded here thinking of the local natural resources as commodities for survival, but many of them grew to treasure the beauty and uniqueness of Jackson Hole. In 35 short years, from Bill Menor's arrival until the establishment of the original smaller park, this land passed from homestead to national treasure.



Bill Menor operating ferry



Grand Teton Natural History Association, established as a not-for-profit corporation in 1937, has provided generations of park visitors with interpretive materials intended to inspire an appreciation of the unique natural and cultural heritage found in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



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