

The Experiences of Stanley and Margaret when at Beaver Lodge with Grey Owl in 1936

In answer to your questions:

- (1) What was grey Owl's daily routine, when writing.
- (2) Did he have a mosquito net there?
- (3) Did he use a dictionary?
- (4) Did Margaret have problems deciphering his writing?
- (5) Did you see him do any sketches such as those used in Sajo and as end papers in Men of the last Frontier? Do you know where any of the original sketches are? (6)
- (6) Did he do photography himself?
- (7) What did he ever say to you about his tours?
- (8) Did he have a slight speech impediment /stutter?
- (9) Did you ever notice that, as he sat down, he would pull up his trousers at the knees- just like an English gentleman? OR did backwoodsmen do this anyway to avoid kneeling the buckskin?
- (10) Who made up his costume?
- (11) What was his favorite food?

These are the questions that were in a letter from Colin Taylor to my brother Stanley. I was visiting him in November 1996 and we went over them together, and wrote the answers that are on a separate sheet. I gather he didn't get the letter away then, so I will send them from both of us. Stanley was quite ill when I was there, and it was a struggle for him. He has since passed away, but I will help in any way I can.

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Grey Owl in 1936.

In answer to your questions:

Grey Owls daily routine when writing was to get up about noon in time for lunch. He slept in a tent that was halfway between the upper and lower cabins. He washed and dressed in the tent. Our lunches were sandwiches from bannock or bread, and some canned meat. Often when we were having dinner at night, we would see from the window above the table, tourists walking over the hill. They came around the lake by way of a portage from Kingsmere Lake, which was a Lake nearby. Our dinner was usually potatoes, canned vegetables and canned meat, or pork and beans. Stanley, our cook, baked an odd pie or his favorite, date squares. Also for a treat, we would boil a can of sweetened condensed milk, which would form a Butterscotch pudding. We would go to Kingsmere Lake to fish for a break, so then would have nice fresh fish for dinner. Grey Owl did not allow fishing in Ajawaan Lake for the safety of the Beaver.

The beavers work all night and sleep in the daytime, as did Grey Owl. We often stayed up half the night too, as the tourists proved to be quite interesting at times. Because of being so far North, it would stay quite light until near midnight, so it was easy to watch the activities of the beaver. With no T.V. or very little radio, they were our main intertainment.

My job was typing the manuscript of "Tales of an Empty Cabin" from Grey Owls writing. His writing was at times, very difficult to decipher. Sometimes I would just have to wait until he woke up, to type a word. With typing in those days, you had to use carbon paper between several sheets of paper, and so to erase a word was no easy task.

We had mosquito nets over our beds to stop the buzzing in our ears. We had comfortable beds, so always enjoyed the fresh air and the quiet.

Grey Owl used a dictionary and a book of Synonyms and also looked in books of Shakespeare for words. I do remember having to look through what books were available to find a picture of a tree that would be suitable for the story of the Tree.

Some of Grey Owls unpublished notes and sketches are in the Archives in Ottawa. Our nephew, Robert Winters and myself, spent several days going through material in the archives, and found it very interesting. It would take a very long time to go through all that is in there. Dawn put all her pictures and momentos in there too. Archie had a camera but very seldom used it. I had a little Box camera and have some pictures from that,

Grey Owl came home from his first tour with many gifts for his daughter Dawn, and also gifts for all our family. He had many gifts given to him from many of his admirers. He was anxious to return to Beaver Lodge and to Jelly Roll and Rawhide, and to his solitude.

Grey Owl had no accent what so ever and certainly no impediment. He was very soft spoken , and we enjoyed listening to him read part^s of his book to us. It sounded more like poetry.

He didn't worry about bulging the knees in his buckskins, as is obvious in many pictures. He kept himself clean and neat.

Anahareo, or Gertie, as we called her, was the designer of his costumes for his tours, cutting the buckskin and doing the beadwork too. It was something she had learned as a child. She made all her own breeches and pants too.

I can't recall any food that was a favorite of Grey Owls, as he was not a fussy eater. We had fried potatoes, bacon and eggs, and rice pudding quite often, or pancakes.