



Zane Grey Museum

Home of the "Father of the Western Novel"
Overlooking the banks of the Delaware River



Prolific western author Zane Grey (1872 - 1939) began his writing career relating stories of his experiences fishing along the Upper Delaware River. He lived in Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania, from 1905 until 1918. Lackawaxen always held a special place in his memories, and was chosen as the site of his final resting place. Today, Grey's home from 1914-1918 is preserved by the National Park Service as part of Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

Early Life

Pearl Zane Gray was born on January 31, 1872, in Zanesville, Ohio, a town founded by his mother's ancestors. (Zane Grey's father changed the spelling of the family name to "Grey" when they moved to Columbus, Ohio in 1890.) As a youth in Ohio, he developed interests in fishing, baseball, and writing. All three pursuits would later bring him acclaim.

Grey's baseball prowess led to a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania's Dental

Department. He graduated in 1896 with a degree in dentistry, but chose to play amateur baseball for several seasons, practicing dentistry intermittently. He established his own dental practice in New York City in 1899.

While residing in New York, he continued to play baseball. He loved to get away from the city, and began visiting Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania. There he fished and enjoyed the outdoors as in his youth.

The Genesis of a Writer

Zane Grey often escaped to Lackawaxen with his brothers. On one of these outings in 1900, Zane ("Doc") met 17-year-old Lina Elise Roth, or "Dolly" as he called her, while canoeing near the Delaware House, a grand boarding house on the river.

Dolly was a positive influence in Grey's struggle to become a successful writer.

Her encouragement and belief in his abilities led him to continue writing despite rejection by publishers.

Grey's first published article was "A Day on the Delaware," in *Recreation* magazine, May 1902. In 1903, Grey wrote, illustrated and published his first novel, *Betty Zane*.

The Lackawaxen Years 1905 - 1918

In 1905, Zane and Dolly were married. He left dentistry to pursue writing full-time and the couple settled into a farmhouse overlooking the junction of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers. In 1906, they took a honeymoon trip to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, and to California — Grey's first trip west.

In 1907, Grey met Western conservationist Colonel J. C. "Buffalo" Jones at a meeting of the Campfire Club in New York City. Using the last of his wife's inheritance, Grey accompanied Jones, as a writer and photographer, on a hunting expedition to the Grand Canyon. This trip marked a turning point in Grey's career as it opened up new vistas in subject matter for his writing. He wrote an account of this adventure, *The Last of the Plainsmen*, published by Outing Press in 1908.

In 1910, Harper & Brothers published *The Heritage of the Desert*, Zane Grey's first western novel and his first real success.

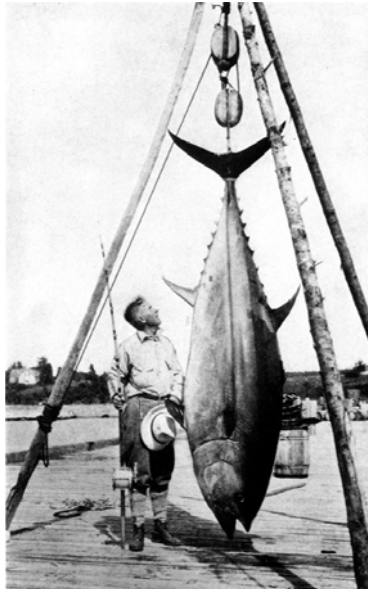
Next came Grey's most noted work, *Riders of the Purple Sage*, published in 1912. By 1915, Grey had 15 books in print along with many fishing and outdoor adventure articles and serialized stories.

Zane and Dolly's three children were born in New York during the Lackawaxen era. In 1912, the family moved into the house built next door by Zane's brother, R.C. In 1914, Zane and Dolly purchased the house. They enlarged it in 1915 and 1916. Zane's study and office were decorated with a frieze of Navajo and Hopi designs, painted by Dolly's cousin, Lillian Wilhelm.

Grey continued his travels to the Southwest. He fished in the Pacific off Catalina Island, in the Florida Keys, Mexico, and Nova Scotia. He moved his family to California in 1918. The family retained the house in Lackawaxen, visiting when they were on the East Coast. Zane Grey's last visit to Lackawaxen was in 1929.



Zane Grey's Later Years



Being in California allowed Grey to work closely with the developing motion picture industry, which had begun producing films based on his novels. For a few years, he had his own production company, Zane Grey Productions, which he sold to Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount). His new home also provided better access to the Western locations he utilized in his writing.

The Greys established a permanent residence in Altadena, California, with a home on Catalina Island and cabins on the Mogollon Rim in Arizona and the Rogue River in Oregon. Grey later had fishing camps in New Zealand, Australia, and Tahiti. He reached many sites via his yachts, *Fisherman* (1924) and *Fisherman II* (1931).

Zane Grey's influence and success continued through the height of the Great Depression. He was a prolific writer, publishing one or

more western novels every year and a fishing or outdoor adventure book every few years until he died. He left behind more than twenty manuscripts which were released after his death.

Grey's success and wealth enabled him to travel the world in pursuit of his favorite sport — fishing. A pioneer in angling, Grey held more than ten world records for large game fish. He was the first person to catch a fish over 1,000 pounds on rod and reel (1,040-pound blue marlin in 1930, Tahiti). His last recognized world-record catch, for a 618-pound silver marlin, was not surpassed until 1953.

Zane Grey died October 23, 1939, at the age of 67. When Dolly died in 1957, the ashes of both were interred in a cemetery near their home in Lackawaxen, fulfilling their wish to rest together beside the Delaware River.

The Zane Grey Museum Lackawaxen, PA

In 1945, six years after Zane Grey's death, his wife Dolly sold their Lackawaxen house to Helen James, daughter of Zane's long-time friend Alvah James.

In 1948, Helen opened the Zane Grey Inn, which she operated for twenty-five years. Over the years, she collected memorabilia associated with Grey and discovered original artwork and other items of interest in her new home.

From 1973 until 1989, Helen and her husband operated the Zane Grey Museum to display the Grey memorabilia, photographs, and books in the rooms that served as Grey's office and

study. The museum was sold in 1989 to the National Park Service. It was included in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River because of Zane Grey's association with the Delaware River and its effect upon the budding writer.

Today, National Park Service rangers and volunteers provide guided tours through the museum and provide for sale a variety of Zane Grey books currently in print.

Here, you can glimpse into the diverse life and character of one of the early twentieth century's most popular and widely-read western writers.

I was overcome with the beauty, the sadness, the loneliness, the desertedness of it. Oh, Dolly, the rooms are haunted. Those are our spirits there. I thrilled and I wept. I recalled everything. I felt the cold of the old cottage. I saw you in bed — I heard Romer's tiny wail, I heard the wind, the river. For the first time I went into the room where my mother died. Something strange came over me there. ... The dust, the dirt, the decay, the ruin reproached me. Why have we not taken care of those places? They are a first and great part of our lives. Love, struggle, work, children — all came to us there.

Letter from Zane Grey to Dolly
June 1929, Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania

For More Information

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

274 River Road
Beach Lake, PA 18405
Phone 570-685-4871
www.nps.gov/upde

Newsletters from the Zane Grey's West Society feature current research and articles of interest for fans and scholars:

Zane Grey's West Society

P.O. Box 34
Elizabethton, TN 37644
423-474-2042
www.zgws.org

The Ohio Historical Society sponsors the Zane Grey Museum near Grey's hometown of Zanesville, Ohio:

National Road/Zane Grey Museum

8850 East Pike
Norwich, OH 43767
740-872-3143 or 1-800-752-2602
www.ohiohistory.org/places/natlroad/

More memorabilia is located near the site of Grey's reconstructed cabin in Arizona:

Rim Country Museum

700 Green Valley Parkway
P.O. Box 2532
Payson, AZ 85547
928-474-3483
www.rimcountrymuseums.org

The G. M. Farley Collection collection of Zane Grey books and periodicals, personal correspondence and the Grey family Bible, is available to the public for research and review through special arrangement from:

Northern Arizona University

Special Collections Department
Cline Library
P.O. Box 6022
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-6022
928-523-5551
www.nau.edu/library/speccoll/index.html

