

FINDING AID

Yellowstone National Park Protection and Safety Records 1913-Present Bulk dates: 1920s-2000s

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HISTORY

1880s - 1950s – The Yellowstone Hospital, located in Mammoth, records births and deaths inside the park.

- 1916 National Park Service created.
- 1916 Soldiers who are members of the Yellowstone Park Detachment and desire to remain in the park are discharged from the Army and appointed rangers in the National Park Service.
- 1916 Automobiles are permitted entrance to tour Yellowstone. The park sees a significant increase in automobile accidents, resulting in personal injury and death.
- 1917 After complaints from the public and elected officials, soldiers return to duty at Yellowstone and the initial ranger force is dismissed from service.
- 1918 The Army is finally and completely withdrawn from the park.
- 1919 James McBride becomes Yellowstone's first chief ranger.
- 1920s Present– Yellowstone keeps individualized records of incidents and accidents inside the park.
- 1946 The Federal Tort Claims Act is passed and the federal government sees an increase in citizen lawsuits for damages to property, person, and deaths occurring in the National Parks.
- 1960s- Construction of new Yellowstone Hospital at Lake.
- 1970 The Stoneman Meadow Riot in Yosemite National Park spurrs some of the first service wide reforms in law enforcement.
- 1972 The grizzly mauling of Harry Walker and ensuing landmark tort claim case.
- 1973 In response to the death of a ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore, new policies are created which require law enforcement rangers to be armed at all times, establish national standards for law enforcement training, and establish criteria for the delegation of law enforcement authority and the use of firearms and defensive equipment.
- 1976 The Authorities Bill (16 USC 1a-6) codifies the statutory authority of the National Park Service to designate employees to maintain law and order and protect persons and property in the national parks. These powers included the ability to carry firearms, make arrests, execute warrants, and conduct investigations.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

PRTOECTION AND SAFETY RECORDS

1913-Present (bulk dates: 1920s-2000s)

CATALOG NUMBER YELL 203469

VOLUME 190 LF

DESCRIPTION Records pertaining to protection and safety, including law

enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), search

and rescue (SAR) functions, and tort claims.

These records also include, but are not limited to: visitor safety concerning wildlife, natural resources, and motor vehicle accidents, criminal activity prevention and investigation, ranger patrols, and park maintenance. Also included are records from the communication center, including emergency dispatches and radio traffic.

Researchers may find these records valuable on the following topics: the development and professionalization of law enforcement in the National Park Service, trends in visitor safety, especially regarding human and wildlife interactions, and changing concepts and perceptions of wilderness.

This collection is especially valuable due to its completeness and date span, ranging from the creation of the National Park Service to the present day. In addition, the length of time covered by this collection allows for longitudinal studies. Taken as a whole, these records document the transformation of the National Park Service's role in managing visitor safety and protection as well as the protection of the park's natural resources.

ORGANIZATION Organized into six series:

Series I: Administrative Reports

Created by Chief Park Rangers and District Rangers detailing the everyday functions of the park.

Series II: Correspondence
Chief Ranger and Superintendent correspondence

pertaining to law enforcement.

Series III: Incident Files

Case Incident Reports created by law enforcement rangers to document various accidents, crimes, and fatalities.

Series IV: Operations

Manuals, protocols, and regulations concerning law enforcement ranger operations and conduct.

Series V: Law Enforcement Logbooks

Logbooks from ranger stations, Chief Ranger's office, and the Communications Center.
Communications Center records also include Case Incident Report registers and radio logs.

Series VI: Patrol Cabin Logbooks
Ranger logbooks from backcountry patrol cabins.

Series I, II, IV, V, and VI retain their original order as arranged by the creating office. In most cases, this arrangement is thematic and chronological, with the exception of newly processed materials added to the end of these series. Photographs can be found in all series, and have been left in their original locations.

Series III has been rearranged by function of the records and then chronologically. The bulk of series III, the case incident reports, have also been rearranged chronologically, although the original order was reconstructed for the case incidents from 1973-1999 due to the uniform assignment of case incident numbers. Several maps and large photographs relating to search and rescue operations and federal tort claims, have been separated from their original location and placed in oversized housing. A separation sheet has been filed in each item's original location.

PROVENANCE

Transferred to the archives by various park offices and staff, primarily the park's law enforcement division, often as part of a larger group of records. This record group is accessioned by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and placed on deposit at its affiliated repository, the Yellowstone National Park Archives. These records correspond to the NARA Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service.

RESTRICTIONS

YES (Series I, SAR Fiscal Reports; Series III, Incident Files; Series V, Communications Center Daily/Radio Logs)

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

Fire Management Records, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Management and Accountability Records, Series III Safety, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Yellowstone Magistrate, U.S. District Court of Wyoming Records, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Gerald Mernin Papers, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Lee Coleman Papers, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Robert "Bob" Flather Research Papers, Yellowstone National Park Archives

Lee H. Whittlesey, "Death in Yellowstone: Accidents and Foolhardiness in the first National Park," Yellowstone Research Library

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Administrative Reports

This series contains the Chief Ranger's monthly reports, ranger annual and monthly reports, organizational charts, situational reports, and morning reports.

Chief Ranger's monthly narrative reports detail information compiled from all the ranger stations, sub-districts rangers, and district rangers. Topics discussed include employees; forest fires; fishing; road, trail and fencing improvements; natural phenomena; visitors; wildlife; protection and care of game; arrests and violations of the law; ranger conferences including meeting minutes, notes, agendas, reports and presentations; annual and quarterly fiscal reports including search and rescue (1969-1998), the Chief Ranger also submitted annual reports (1940-1995) for inclusion in the Superintendent's annual reports.

Monthly ranger reports were created by district rangers and park rangers. Topics include: weather; special activities; inspections; accidents; personnel; complaints, research and observations; interpretive contacts; fish and game (wildlife) census; fish planting; trapping and hunting violations; fire protection; building and fence maintenance; trail condition surveys; public contact and use statistics; monthly meeting minutes and committee meeting notes; automobile traffic statistics (1966-1972); and study of traffic conditions. Reports on the Mount Washburn ski area are for 1941 only.

Organization charts show growth and change in the Ranger Division from 1964-2002. The division's hierarchy, grade, title and ranger's name are included in the charts.

Situational reports includes Communication Center statistics, boating and diving statistics; ski area narrative reports (1941), audits, firearms inventories (as assigned to individual rangers), and search and rescue statistics.

Morning reports (1970-1990) made by the Chief Ranger's office contain weather reports, road conditions, staffing reports, wildlife and geothermal concerns, training opportunities, and upcoming administrative deadlines. These were distributed internally, or for announcement by park dispatchers.

II. Correspondence

This series contains correspondence from the Chief Ranger's Office and the Superintendent's Office. Topics include: permits (hunting, firearms, boating, vehicles, fishing, over-snow vehicles, backcountry use); visitor letters (compliments and complaints); accident, injury and theft reports; violations of regulations; employment applications; fugitive notices; statistical reports on vehicle use and public use; annual reports on threats to the park; zoning; regulations; jurisdiction; horse and mule use; staff housing rates and use; law enforcement activity; tort claims and judicial activity; staff instructions and orders; organizational goals

and objectives; training; agreements; lost and found; safety; concessions; mining; land use; grazing; and grizzly bear and wildlife management.

III. Incident Files

The bulk of this series includes incident reports from the 1920s to the 2000s that contain significant information from motor vehicle accidents, criminal and animal incidents, as well as fatalities. Also included are federal tort claims, boards of inquiry, bond logs, violation notices, birth and death records, arrest records, warrants, and court orders.

Indices are provided for the years 1941-1953, 1973-1989 and 1995-1999 and can be found at the beginning of the series.

Case incidents encompass a wide variety of emergency services inside the park, and are formatted into two categories: case incident *files* from the 1920s to the early 1970s and case incident *reports* from around 1972 to present. This is significant because it allowed the National Park Service to have a uniform reporting system through the park's Communications Center in Mammoth, instead of case incident files being reported through the Chief Ranger's Office and Superintendent's Office annual reports.

Early case incident files from 1926-1929 include special reports on attempts to reactivate Handkerchief Thermal Pool and the death of two beavers by falling off Tower Falls, as well as files on National Park Service and concessioner employee injuries. The main types of case incidents throughout the date span include bear attacks, bison gorings, heart attacks, health issues related to elevation and exertion, falls, drownings, suicides, murders, rapes, domestic disputes, poaching incidents, thermal burns, work related injuries, structural fires, wild fires, security alarms, alcohol and drug related crimes, disorderly conduct, larceny, protests, vehicle accidents and fatalities, search and rescue efforts, and law enforcement assistance to other agencies.

Case Incident Reports often include both Emergency Medical Service reports filed by the first responders, as well as reports from rangers, and if relevant, statements from witnesses. Of special note are the files related to the plane crashes of a B-17 and B-47, and subsequent retrieval efforts in the 1990s.

The tort files range from the mid-1950s until the mid-2000s, and encompass claims for damages to person and property. Claimants include both visitors to the park as well as park employees. Major tort files of note include the Harry Walker case of 1972, the Andy Boldizar case of 2001, and the Lance Buschi case of 2004.

Birth and Death records span from the late 1920s until the 1970s. Although these records state Mammoth Hospital or Lake Hospital (after 1963) as the location of birth or death, certificates were issued by Health Departments in Wyoming and Montana.

IV. Operations

This series contains memoranda, manuals, and protocols regarding operations and conduct of law enforcement, as well as EMS and medical operations and contracts. Ranger manuals and ranger station manuals document official protocol for daily operations. The regulations manuals define special and general law enforcement regulations within the park. The series also contains annual group photographs of Yellowstone law enforcement rangers.

V. Law Enforcement Logbooks

This series contains logbooks from ranger stations, the Chief Ranger's Office, and the Communication Center.

Ranger station logbooks include weather conditions, station maintenance reports, incidents and injuries, wildlife sightings, fire lookout and protection, station opening and closing procedures, park visitor contacts, fee collection, and law enforcement activities. Of note, the logbooks provide ranger accounts of the 1988 fire season. Also included are scrapbooks from the Old Faithful Ranger Station, 1975-1990.

The daily logs of the Chief Ranger's Office include daily weather conditions, travel by rangers within the park, fire reports, law enforcement activities (investigations, arrests, and court proceedings), maintenance and repairs, staffing and duty assignments, and snow removal reports.

Communication Center logbooks document the park's daily radio and telephone communications. Topics include weather conditions and forecasts, visitor communications and incoming phone calls, road reports; road closures, motor vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, aircraft within the park, search and rescue activities, case incident registers, incarceration registers, and geothermal activity.

Of special note are the daily diaries of Chief Ranger George Baggley, dated 1930-1934.

VI. Patrol Cabin Logbooks

This series contains logbooks from the backcountry patrol cabins throughout the park.

The entries include cabin chores (splitting wood, trash removal, cleaning, cooking, and cabin repairs), lists of supplies, weather conditions, animal sightings and interactions, visitor registers, firefighting efforts, reports of earthquakes, recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, boating; and trail crew activities.

CONTAINER LIST

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04	Chief Ranger Monthly Reports, 1961-1962
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16	Ranger Monthly Reports Canyon, 1940-1966
17	Ranger Monthly Reports Lamar, Cooke City, Soda Butte, Tower, 1924-1927
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20	Ranger Monthly Reports Tower, 1930-1956
21	Ranger Monthly Reports Tower, 1964-1975
22	Ranger Monthly Reports Tower and Lamar, 1970-1973
23	Ranger Monthly Reports Lamar, 1938-1963, 1985
24	Ranger Monthly Reports Northeast Entrance, 1935-1969
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26	Ranger Monthly Reports Mammoth District, 1935-1945
27	Ranger Monthly Reports Mammoth District, 1942-1956
28	Ranger Monthly Reports Mammoth Sub-district, 1970-1975
29	Ranger Monthly Reports North District southern sites, 1940-1960
30	Ranger Monthly Reports Thoroughfare, 1935-1951, 1959-1966; West Thumb, 1934-1956, 1964
31	Ranger Monthly Reports South District, 1938-1969
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33	Ranger Monthly Reports Lake, 1951-1972
34	Ranger Monthly Reports Gallatin, 1936-1950; West District, 1932-1940; Snake River, 1950-1959, 1972-1975
35	Ranger Monthly Reports Old Faithful, 1943-1958; West District, 1935-1946
36	Ranger Monthly Reports West District, 1957-1963
37	Ranger Monthly Reports West District, 1964-1972
38	Ranger Monthly Reports West Yellowstone, 1941-1956
39	Ranger Monthly Reports West Yellowstone, 1959-1971
40	Ranger Monthly Reports Bechler, 1935-1963
41	Ranger Monthly Reports, 1946-1968
42	Ranger Monthly Reports West Side, 1961-1967
43	Organization Charts, 1964-2002
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45	Monthly Reports by Ranger, 1934-1938
46	Monthly Meetings by Ranger District, 1970-1977

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Series II: Correspondence

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46	Case Incident Reports: #3888-4739, 1993 Robert L. Frahm
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08	Manuals, Instructions, Plans, 1977-1999
09	Emergency Medical Services Treatment Protocols, Operations Plans, Risk
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10	Emergency Medical Services Protocols, Management, Changes to Procedure and
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Series V: Law Enforcement Logbooks

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Curtis K. Skinner, 1948-1952

Otto M. Brown, 1952-1959

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Roger Siglin, 1977

Thomas O. Hobbs, 1980-1985

Dan R. Sholly, 1985-1998

Rick Obernesser, 1998-2009

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