

# Yellowstone Science

A quarterly publication devoted to the natural and cultural resources



Introducing the Davis Collection  
Native Americans and Geysers  
Waiting on the Beehive

Volume 9

Number 4



*Nineteenth century American landscape painters romanticized nature, which had become a symbol of national identity. Humans (note fleeing figure in lower left corner) were reduced to disproportionate size or omitted altogether. Conversely, the dimensions of Giant Geyser in this engraving were magnified. "The Giant Geyser" from Picturesque America or The Land We Live In, edited by William Cullen Bryant, New York, Appleton and Co., 1872, p. 314.*

## Myths, Memories, and Memorabilia

For many people and for many reasons, Yellowstone is legendary. Indeed, it might be considered a land of legends. Some of these myths and stories have had a positive influence on how society perceives this place. By their very nature, though, legends may not be well grounded in fact and yet, they often contain a symbolic truth. This could be said of the famous "campfire legend" about how and where the national park idea was allegedly born.

Other legends, however, may do harm to the truth. This is the case with the story, perpetuated over the past century or more, that American Indians were afraid of Yellowstone. In his article *Fear or Reverence? Native Americans and the Geysers of Yellowstone*, Joseph Weixelman presents another view. As an historian, Weixelman applies the rigors of his profession to chasing down the source of this

belief. In the process of doing so, he differentiates between the feelings of "fear" and "reverence" as they are attributed to things sacred.

Reverence is an emotion that many cultures have felt toward Yellowstone. From the American Indians, to the Euro-American exploring parties, to today's visitors, Yellowstone is something of a mecca, a sacred place. It seems to possess the power to provoke us, to impress itself on our minds and in our hearts, and even to transform lives. Mike Green's article, *Waiting on the Beehive* is one such testimony. Mike tells us how Yellowstone makes a memory for his family that transcends generations. While reviewing this article, I couldn't help but reminisce about such experiences of my own and hope that our readers will reflect on theirs, as well.

Yellowstone has been an important

place to Susan Delin Davis since she was a child growing up in Bozeman, Montana. She began collecting Yellowstone antiques in 1967. Since then, she and her husband Jack Davis have assembled the largest known private collection in the world. Among people who collect Yellowstone memorabilia, the Davis Collection is legendary. It is our great fortune that, through the efforts of the Yellowstone Park Foundation, the park has been able to acquire this extraordinary cultural resource. "Souvenir" is French for the verb, "to remember." In fact, an industry has built up around the human need to recall its most precious moments. The interview with the Davises introducing their collection takes readers on a nostalgic stroll through the history of the visitor experience in Yellowstone and calls them to *remember* their own.

RJA

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*On the cover: Coated specimens (early park souvenirs), encrusted with mineral deposits from hot springs and terraces. Left to right, horseshoe, 1893; inkwell, 1889; horseshoe, 1897. William Henry Jackson stereoview of coating specimens at Mammoth Hot Springs, 1892. All part of the Davis Collection; courtesy Susan and Jack Davis. Above: Beehive Geyser. NPS photo.*

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# Fear or Reverence?

## *Native Americans and the Geysers of Yellowstone*

By Joseph Owen Weixelman

When two Pend d'Oreille Indians guided trapper Warren Ferris along Yellowstone's Firehole River in 1834, he wanted to see the geysers and hot springs he'd heard about at the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous, an annual gathering of mountain men held under the auspices of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He later wrote in his journal:

I ventured near enough to put my hand into the water of its basin, but withdrew it instantly, for the heat of the water in this immense cauldron, was altogether too great for comfort, and the agitation of the water, the disagreeable effluvium continually exuding, and the hollow unearthly rumbling under the rock on which I stood, so ill accorded with my notions of personal safety, that I retreated back precipitately to a respectful distance. The Indians who were with me, were quite appalled, and could not by any means be induced to approach them. They seemed astonished at my presumption in advancing up to the large one, and when I safely returned, congratulated me on my "narrow escape."— They believed them to be supernatural, and supposed them to be the production of the Evil Spirit. One of them remarked that hell, of which he had heard from the whites, must be in the vicinity.

Ferris's report has often been adduced as evidence that Indians feared Yellowstone's geysers, an assumption that was relayed to early visitors to Yellowstone and became the prevailing view among social scientists. However, hundreds of

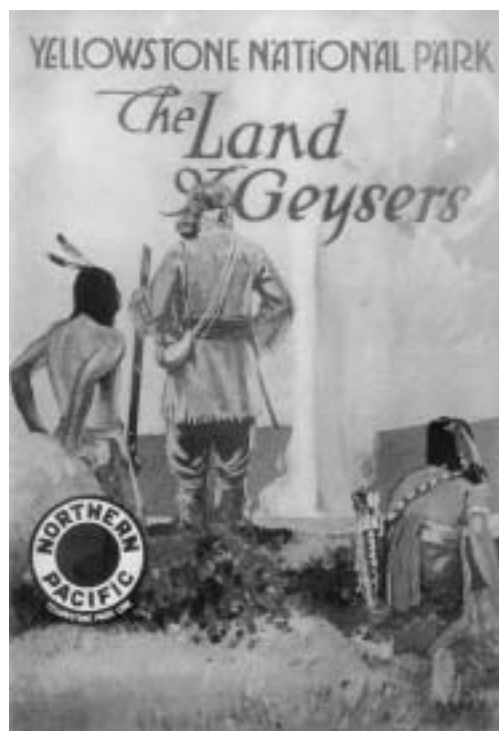
years before the first Euro-Americans gazed on the Firehole valley, many American Indians went to the geyser basins to pray, meditate, and bathe. Most native peoples revered the land of Yellowstone and many treated it as sacred in their cosmology. While a sense of fear may have been linked with the geysers and hot springs, the belief that this was the predominant emotion or indicated a primitive intellect is mistaken. Instead, it is more accurate to say that American Indians understood the area to be linked to the powers of their Creator, powers that were difficult to understand and could be dangerous. Such a place had to be properly respected and one could not take a journey there lightly. A different impression of native attitudes toward Yellowstone can be arrived at by deconstructing trapper accounts like those of Ferris and supplementing them with oral histories, archeological evidence, and other sources.

A common problem in Euro-Ameri-

can perceptions of American Indians is a tendency to regard them as a single culture. Native North America can be divided into a dozen cultural regions, each with distinctive economic, political, social, and religious systems. Yellowstone National Park lies near the junction of three of these cultural regions—the Great Basin, the Plateau, and the Great Plains—where wide variations in native perceptions of Yellowstone could occur. Cultural differences may also be found even between bands of the same tribe. If it is misleading to speak of Indian culture as a monolithic entity, it is equally deceptive to speak of an Indian fear of Yellowstone. Different tribes and bands responded to the geysers differently, just as they responded to Euro-Americans differently.

### **Native Americans in Yellowstone**

People have inhabited the Yellowstone region for at least the past 7,500 years. Although archeological evidence



*Historical representation of Indians' timidity at an erupting geyser. Note the confident stance and lead position of the fur trapper juxtaposed with that of his native companions. Possibly portraying the Warren Ferris account (see below). From a park guide entitled "Yellowstone National Park: The Land of Geysers" published in 1917 by the Northern Pacific Railway. Yellowstone museum collection.*

has been found of Paleo-Indian presence in the thermal basins, the first written historical record indicates that the native peoples who resided closest to the Yellowstone region at the start of the nineteenth century included the Blackfeet, Crow, Shoshone, and Bannock. The territorial boundary for these tribes was formed by the high mountain ranges that come together there.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 recognized Blackfeet lands as those to the north and west of the Yellowstone River. As fur trappers ventured into this area, the Blackfeet were possessive of their territory and battled Euro-Americans over the game found there. The same treaty recognized Crow title to lands to the south and east of the Yellowstone River. Fur trapper Edwin Denig identified their lands as including some “boiling springs” in the vicinity of the upper Yellowstone and the Crow warrior, Two Leggings, spoke of a trip there in his youth. As European diseases took their toll on tribal numbers, the Blackfeet slowly departed from the region and ceded their claims to the Yellowstone valley in the Treaty of 1855. However, when Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, the extreme northern portion of the park (east of the Yellowstone River in Montana) was actually part of Crow territory until a Council in 1883 agreed to cede this mountainous land and move the tribal agency eastward.

The claims of the Shoshone and Bannock, who lived west of the Continental Divide where the terrain was poorly understood by the treaty-makers, were not formally recognized by the Treaty of 1851, but their presence in the region is well-documented. On good terms with each other, the Shoshone and Bannock hunted from central Wyoming to eastern California, entering the Yellowstone region through the forks of the Snake River. The Tukudeka, who became known as the Sheep Eater Indians, lived in the mountainous regions of central and eastern Idaho and northwestern Wyoming. Once regarded as a distinct tribe, most anthropologists now consider them a band of the Shoshone. Other Shoshone bands also named themselves by what they ate: Salmon Eaters (Agaidika), Fish Eaters (Pengwidika), Dove Eaters (Haivodika),

and Buffalo Eaters (Kucundika). Although some early writers depicted the Tukudeka as superstitious, poor, and even squalid, Richard Bartlett used Osborne Russell’s trapper narrative as evidence that they lived well by aboriginal standards despite their lack of horses. They hunted bighorn sheep, deer, elk, pronghorn, and bear, and their clothing, hides, and bows were in high demand among other Shoshone bands. The Tukudeka left Yellowstone when, under pressure from Superintendent Philetus Norris, the agent at Fort Washakie sent a party of Shoshone “to escort the Tukudeka to new homes on the Wind River Reservation” in 1879.

The Nez Perce, Flathead, Kalispel, Pend d’Oreille, and Coeur d’Alene were also known to travel to the Yellowstone region regularly. According to Yellow Wolf, one of Chief Joseph’s scouts in the Nez Perce War, they were familiar with the Yellowstone country and the “hot smoking springs and the high-shooting water were nothing new” to them. The Assiniboine have traditions of journeying from the plains of northeastern Montana as far as the geyser basins of Yellow-

stone. There is one mention of the Arapaho and a few that also place Lakota in the region.

Moses Harris, the park’s first acting superintendent during the period of army administration, tried to prevent Bannock hunting parties from entering the region during the 1880s, but they continued to hunt in areas around the park into the 1890s. In 1896, in the case of *Ward v. Race Horse*, the Supreme Court found that native hunting rights no longer existed in the region. By the end of the nineteenth century, native peoples were seldom seen in Yellowstone.

### Origins of the Frightened Indians Story

The Euro-American belief that Indians were frightened by Yellowstone’s geysers fit in with the stereotype of Indians as “savages” who were scared of natural phenomena such as lightning, thunder, volcanoes, or even spouting waters. The explorers and trappers who heard of Yellowstone’s wonders from Indians or entered the region with Indian guides generally did so without any appreciation for native religious beliefs; as



*Map of approximate tribal territories in and around the Yellowstone plateau, circa 1850. Map courtesy Peter Nabokov and Larry Loendorf from Restoring a Presence: A Documentary Overview of Native Americans and Yellowstone National Park, forthcoming from the University of Oklahoma Press.*

was the accepted view among Euro-Americans at the time, Indians were regarded as pagans and heathens. According to George Horse Capture, deputy assistant director of the National Museum of the American Indian, mountain men wandered through the region “carrying few possessions, but a lot of cultural baggage.”

Therefore, it is necessary to question the primary sources on which historians rely. Euro-American chroniclers seldom named their sources or the tribal affiliations of the Indians mentioned, or indicated how they obtained their information. George Horse Capture told me that although trappers depicted Indians as wild and without rules, it was the trappers who often came West to live away from the rules of their society, while native tribes lived in complex cultures with well-developed, albeit unwritten, laws. Anthropologists have also demonstrated the ordered nature of American Indian life in numerous studies.

The first reference to the possibility that Indians feared the Yellowstone region appears in the expedition journals of William Clark. Under the heading, “Notes of information I believe correct,” Clark included information he received in 1808 from George Drouillard, another fur trader. It contains the following text:

[A]t the head of this river the Indians give an account that very frequently there is a loud noise [*sic*] heard like thunder which makes the earth tremble—they state that they seldom go there because their children cannot sleep at night for this noise and conceive it possessed of spirits who are averse that men should be near them.

Although Drouillard’s report indicates that these Indians avoided the area, he explained that they did so because of their belief that Yellowstone was home to spirits they did not wish to upset. He does not directly state that they were frightened by these spirits, but implies that they respected them.

Daniel Potts, Joe Meek, and Osborne Russell, who were among the first trappers to enter the Yellowstone area, all left written accounts of the thermal basins,

and Russell stayed with a Tukudeka encampment, but none of them commented on native beliefs about Yellowstone. The most renowned trapper associated with Yellowstone, Jim Bridger, repeated the story that the geysers frightened the Indians, but he was notorious for embellishing his tales with artful fabrications of petrified forests containing petrified birds singing petrified songs and rivers that ran so fast the friction heated them. The Jesuit missionary, Pierre-Jean DeSmet, never visited the Yellowstone region, but he

drew a map for the Fort Laramie Treaty Council with Bridger’s help, and that may explain why he wrote, shortly after attending the treaty conference:

The hunters and Indians speak of it with a superstitious fear, and consider it the abode of evil spirits, that is to say, a kind of hell. Indians seldom approach it without offering some sacrifice, or at least without presenting the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits, that they may be



*Frontispiece for the book entitled, The Story of Man in Yellowstone by Merrill D. Beal, published in 1949 by Caxton Printers, Ltd. Depicting an unknown fur trapper taken aback by an erupting geyser. His particular emotional reaction—fear? awe? surprise?—can’t be known with certainty either.*

propitious. They declare that the subterranean noises proceed from the forging of warlike weapons: each eruption of earth is in their eyes, the result of a combat between the infernal spirits.

This anecdotal myth seems to derive more from the pagan Greeks than with American Indians. Although the Indians DeSmet was referring to had no indigenous knowledge of metallurgy or weapons forging, Bridger had once worked as an apprentice to a blacksmith in St. Louis, and would have heard such stories from other smiths. He received no other education, was reputed to have an excellent memory, and was said to be superstitious himself.

Subsequent exploring parties readily accepted the idea that Indians feared the geysers, but their sources were nameless mountain men. David Folsom, in the Folsom-Cook-Peterson exploring party of 1869, heard from trappers that Indians believed the region to be the abode of evil spirits. Nathaniel P. Langford, who helped organize the 1870 Washburn expedition, met Bridger in 1866 and believed some of his tales of spouting geysers might be true. He makes no note of talking with Indians, but later wrote in his expedition journal, "The Indians approach [the Yellowstone region] under the fear of a superstition originating in the volcanic forces surrounding it." Likewise, Lt. Gustavus Doane, who accompanied the Washburn expedition, doesn't mention his source, but noted in his journal that "[t]he larger tribes never enter this basin, restrained by superstitious ideas in connection with the thermal springs."

After Norris became park superintendent in 1877, he repeatedly referred to the Indians' "superstitious awe of the hissing springs, sulphur basins, and spouting geysers" in his annual reports to the Secretary of the Interior. When the Nez Perce retreated through Yellowstone during the War of 1877, Norris believed they chose this route out of desperation and because they had "acquired sufficient civilization and Christianity to at least overpower their pagan superstitious fear of *earthly* fire-hole basins and brimstone pits." However, the Indians who fled from Oregon and Idaho under Chief Joseph, Little Bird,

and Looking Glass were the most traditional Nez Perce bands in following native religious practices.

Harry Norton's 1873 guidebook on Yellowstone stated that "there exists among [Indians] an unconquerable superstition that the great Manitou here displays his anger towards his red children." Thirteen years later, in *Through the Yellowstone Park on Horseback*, George Wingate repeated Norris's description of the Indian fear of geysers almost verbatim. Hiram Chittenden, who wrote the first history of Yellowstone in 1895, found it strange that "no knowledge of that country seems to have been derived from the Indians." However, he believed that Indians avoided the region for practical reasons, because if they had superstitions about it, there would have been "well authenticated Indian traditions of so marvelous a country."

### **Twentieth Century Views of Indians in Yellowstone**

An assumption that Indians were frightened of Yellowstone had become prevalent by the 1930s. A 1929 book written by Superintendent Horace Albright with Frank Taylor suggested that Indians both feared the geysers and found the land to be inaccessible and of little utility. The most recent validation for the idea that the Indians feared the geysers appears in the work of Ake Hultkrantz, the Swedish historian who is largely responsible for its widespread acceptance among anthropologists. In a 1954 article in *Ethnos*, Hultkrantz maintained that the Indians' fear of going to Yellowstone was so strong it constituted a religious-emotional taboo that could be overcome only in times of distress. He regarded their reticence in providing information about the region as evidence of an Indian belief that even mentioning the names of the places where geysers existed was dangerous. The *Ethnos* article later became a chapter in Hultkrantz's 1981 book, *Belief and Worship in Native North America*.

Hultkrantz based his research on sources which, by his own admission, are not rich, being mostly Shoshone. These sources include: 1) the accounts of early trappers and explorers, primarily DeSmet

and Ferris; 2) official reports regarding the exploration and establishment of the park, particularly those of Lt. Doane, Superintendent Norris, and General Phillip Sheridan; 3) later non-official documents, including books on the "Sheepeaters" and a letter from the superintendent of Wind River Agency; and 4) notes from his fieldwork among Shoshone on the Wind River Reservation between 1948 and 1958.

While Indian fear of the Yellowstone region continued to be mentioned in guidebooks into the 1980s, some historians following Chittenden doubted this interpretation. Since the late 1940s archeologists have located lithic scatters, timbered lodges (or wickiups), and other debris indicating aboriginal campsites throughout Yellowstone, including thermal areas at the Norris, Midway, and Lower geyser basins. (In the early years of the park, many arrowheads and artifacts were removed or purchased by visitors as souvenirs.) Of the more than 400 former Indian campsites that have been located in the park, more than 40 are near areas of thermal activity. Archeologist Carling Malouf, who identified occupation sites around Mammoth, along the Firehole River, and behind the Old Faithful Inn, rejected the "Indian fear" hypothesis in 1958. Writing in 1974, historian Aubrey Haines believed that the Indians who possessed a fear of geysers were only those "whose contact with whites had developed a conception of an underworld."

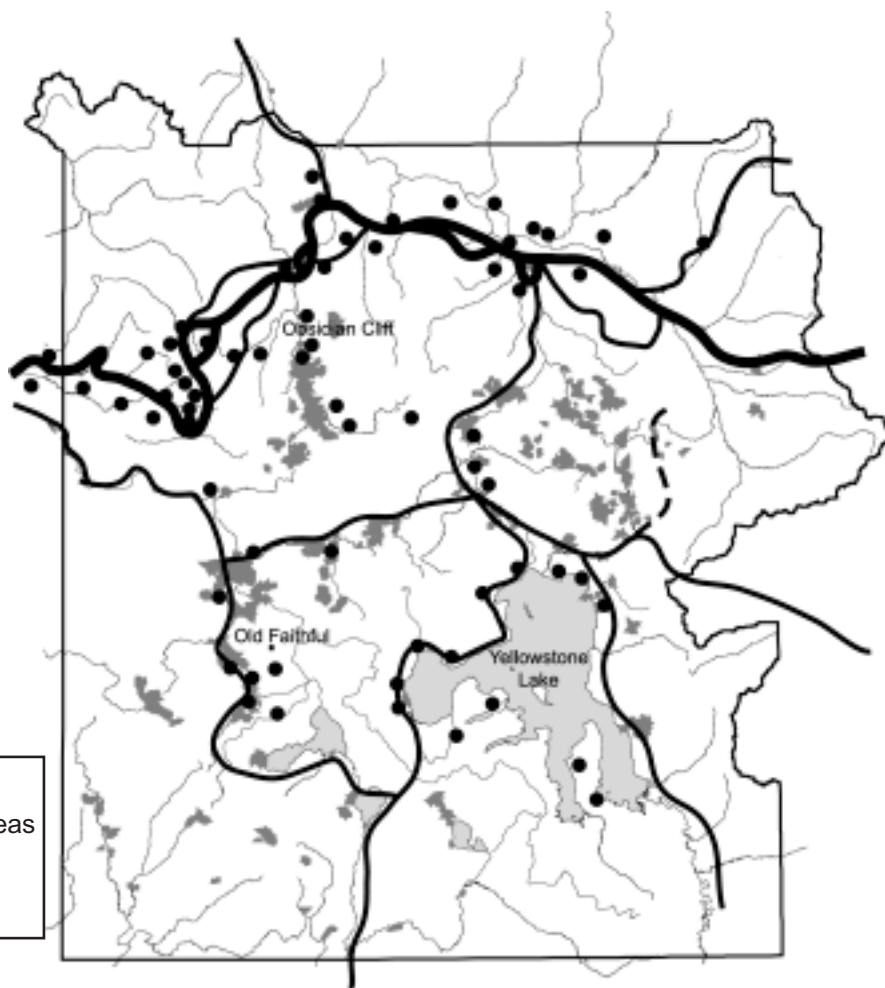
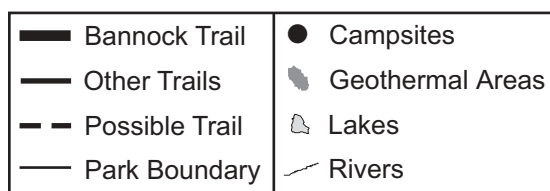
Hultkrantz did revise his argument in 1979, taking into account archeological evidence that seemed to contradict his belief that the geysers were taboo to the Indians, but he maintained his original thesis while downplaying native fear of "the less dramatic hot springs." Though somewhat skeptical, anthropologist Joel Janetski repeated most of Hultkrantz's thesis in his 1987 book on the Indians of Yellowstone.

### **What the Indians Knew**

Chittenden and Hultkrantz were among those who based their conclusions about Indians in Yellowstone on a perception that while the Indians gave geographical information to explorers,



*Yellowstone map depicts Native American trails and campsites, and their proximities to the park's geothermal areas. Map courtesy J. Weixelman, geothermal data provided by Yellowstone's Spatial Analysis Center, and digital treatment by Tami Blackford.*



they did not mention Yellowstone's wonders. More recently, however, historians have found evidence of how Indians shared their knowledge with Euro-Americans that suggests otherwise. In 1805, the Governor of Louisiana Territory, James Wilkinson, learned about the Yellowstone headwaters and a "volcano" nearby from a map drawn on a buffalo hide by an unidentified Indian. Sometime after his return to St. Louis in 1806, Meriwether Lewis wrote that, according to Indian sources, the Yellowstone River had "a considerable fall . . . within the mountains but at what distance from it's source we never could learn." While reconnoitering the route for a road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton in 1863, Capt. John Mullan learned from Indians of the existence of "an infinite number of hot springs at the headwaters of the Missouri, Columbia, and Yellowstone rivers, and that hot geysers, similar to those in California, existed at the head of the Yellowstone." George Harvey Bacon, a Montana prospector, went to the Upper Gey-

ser Basin with "a friendly band of Indians" in 1865. That same year, Father Francis Kuppens visited the sights of Yellowstone, including its geysers, in the company of Blackfeet.

Hultkrantz claimed that Indians avoided the thermal basins and few Indian trails went there, but despite its relatively severe climate and demanding topography, the Yellowstone region actually had more trails than other parts of Wyoming. Like Indian trails elsewhere, they followed the river valleys and therefore came close to the geysers and hot springs at West Thumb, Mud Volcano, and in the Firehole valley. Many of these English names associated with Yellowstone today are not exactly enticing, yet Hultkrantz regarded Indian names for Yellowstone as evidence of their fear, stating that such names were "soberly descriptive" and did not reveal their emotional attitude toward the region.

The Shoshone referred to the Yellowstone region as the place where "Water-keeps-on-coming-out." According to leg-

end, the Blackfeet name for the area, "Many Smokes," comes from the fact that when they first saw the steam from the geysers, they thought it was smoke from an enemy camp. Other recorded Indian names for Yellowstone include "Burning Mountain" and "Summit of the World." But these names for the Yellowstone region are not noticeably different from those used by American Indians elsewhere. The Wyandot name for the Missouri River translates as "muddy water" and their name for the Kansas City, Missouri, site translates as "the point where rock projects into the Muddy Water." The Cheyenne called the Smoky Hill the "Bunch of Trees River" and the Solomon River, "Turkey Creek." Closer to Yellowstone, the Crow called the Stillwater River, "Buffalo Jumps Over the Bank River" and the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, "Rotten Sun Dance Lodge River." The National Park Service uses Blackfeet names for places within Glacier National Park including "Chief Mountain" and "Two Medicine Lake."



## The Bannock Trail

Heavy snowfall kept the Yellowstone area inaccessible much of the year, game was more plentiful at lower elevations, and the mountains made travel difficult. Yet in the 1840s, after the buffalo were exterminated from the Snake River plains, the Bannock developed an old trail adjacent to hot springs at Mammoth and near the Yellowstone River crossing into a major thoroughfare to reach the buffalo ranges of Montana and Wyoming. By crossing over the mountains perpendicular to the river valleys, the trail avoided war parties of Blackfeet and Lakota on the plains, providing greater safety than other routes to the Bighorn Basin and Powder River country. Scouting and hunting parties could access the plains and the valleys to check on the position of both the buffalo and their enemies while the rest of the tribe stayed secure in the mountains. Estimated by Haines to be 200 miles long, it came to be known as the Bannock Trail, but it was also used by the Northern Shoshone, Nez Perce, Kootenai, Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Crow, and is still visible in places today. The fact that tribes used the Bannock Trail to avoid contact with enemies would suggest that the Yellowstone region was to be feared less than their enemies.

Wayne Repogle, a Yellowstone naturalist who explored the Bannock Trail

more than anyone else in the twentieth century, referred to it as a "great aboriginal highway." He saw the frequent splitting and rejoining of alternative trail routes as evidence that the trail was used by a variety of groups of people for a variety of reasons under varying weather conditions. The Euro-American explorers who entered Yellowstone always used Indian trails. Both the Folsom and Washburn parties used the Bannock Trail. As described by Lt. Doane:

Passing over this high rolling prairie for several miles, we struck at length a heavy Indian trail leading up the river, and finding a small colt abandoned on the range, we knew that they [a party of Crow Indians] were but a short distance ahead of us.... Descending from the plateau through a steep ravine into the valley, and skirting for a distance of two miles a swampy flat, we came to the first warm spring found on the route...

### What the Indians Say

Elders from several tribes have preserved the history and traditions of their people concerning the Yellowstone region. Because more than a hundred years have passed since these tribes were forced to move to lands far from Yellowstone, there are discontinuities in the record.

The army had to order some tribes, like the Bannock, to stay out of Yellowstone, creating an enmity that has persisted. I found that my efforts to obtain oral histories were hampered by previous research conducted by anthropologists and historians who did not respect tribal customs and did not receive approval from the elders for what they wrote. As a result, many tribal cultural committees were no longer willing to cooperate with researchers.

Although the accuracy of oral histories may be questioned, especially when three generations separate the sources from the attitudes under investigation, there are good reasons to give them as much credence as has been accorded the reports of early nineteenth century fur trappers. First, the information collected pertains to overall attitudes and values surrounding Yellowstone rather than specific dates or places. One is likely to remember the impressions one's grandparents leave more accurately than specific events. Second, these tribal elders are familiar with the culture in question and with using oral traditions. In some cases, they could infer attitudes from their knowledge of what their ancestors believed. For example, Oliver Archdale could explain that if the Assiniboine had feared Yellowstone, they would have gone there to test themselves, given his understanding of the culture of which he is a part. Although it is possible that their closeness to their culture might make them want to present it in the most flattering way, the same is equally true when using accounts written by non-Indians.

Finally, information gathered through an oral history may be considered particularly reliable when it is corroborated by another, independently given interview. For example, George Kicking Woman, a respected elder and religious leader of the Blackfeet nation, reported in 1992 that the Yellowstone region was sacred to the Shoshones without knowing that Haman Wise, who was a descendant of both the Wind River Shoshone and the Bannock, had made the same point in 1991. The fact that the Shoshone and Blackfeet are traditional enemies and Kicking Woman had nothing to gain by his statement added to the credibility of Wise's claim.



*Joseph Weixelman on the Bannock Trail in 1998. The trail is still visible in places today. Photo courtesy J. Weixelman.*

What we can learn from these oral histories is that different tribes used Yellowstone in different ways. Like Hultkrantz's sources, Wise spoke of both the sacred nature of the geyser basins for the Shoshone and Bannock, and the practical use of the hot springs for bathing. However, unlike Hultkrantz, Wise claimed that the park's thermal wonders did not frighten the Shoshone or the Bannock. "The Indians wasn't scared of it. This was a valuable place for them. This was more of a spiritual [place]. It was something cherished by them..." Wise understood the connotation that "fear" has for Euro-Americans and felt certain that such fear was not a part of his people's response to the region. Yet, stressing the sacred nature of the region, he insinuated that there were practices that had to be followed to demonstrate the proper respect. Without such practices, one would be in danger of showing disrespect and paying the consequences.

The Indian use of hot springs for bathing and their construction of tubs to hold the water has been documented elsewhere in the West. According to geologist George Marler, Indians were responsible for diverting Tangled Creek to create a reservoir at Tank Spring (also called Ranger Pool or Old Bath Lake) in the Lower Geyser Basin. In 1973 he reported that "the degree of mineral deposition [and] the fact that the pond was used for bathing in the 1880s, strongly suggests that it had its origin prior to 1870." Although other archeologists have disputed his claim, Marler considered this basin, which has a diameter of 60 feet, one of Yellowstone's "most important archeological sites."

One of Hultkrantz's sources told the story of Nakok, a Shoshone who went to Yellowstone to hunt; when "they arrived at the steaming waters...undressed and bathed, and came back clean." Wise, who was appointed by the Wind River Reservation Tribal Council "to represent the Eastern Shoshone Tribe concerning all Traditional, Cultur[al], Spiritual, Ceremonial & Sacred sites, etc," explained, "This is a natural Jacuzzi for us.... It's healthy.... There is a lot of value to these springs." He mentioned that the Shoshone and Bannock used mud from the mudpots to clean and purify the skin much as mud

packs are used in health resorts today. The Shoshone at Coso Hot Springs in California were also known to use hot mud for baths. Chief White Hawk, who had fled with Chief Joseph across the park in 1877, told park naturalist William Kearns in 1935 that the Nez Perce were not scared of the geysers. According to Kearns, White Hawk "implied that the Indians used them for cooking." Stories among the Crow suggest that they did the same, and might have drunk geyser water to promote good health.

Some tribes may have gathered pigments for paints from the minerals in the thermal areas. One Yellowstone guide remembered the Indians of the region "got most of their colors from the Mammoth Paint Pots." Walter McClintock, who wrote extensively on the Blackfeet, recorded that they obtained pigment for yellow paint from "a place on the Yellowstone River near some warm springs." The Shoshone soaked the horns of bighorn sheep in the hot water until they were malleable enough to be shaped. This was perhaps the technique used by the Tukudeka to make horn bows. James Beckwourth related that the Crow used the hot springs in a similar way to straighten buffalo and elk horns.

## Yellowstone as Sacred Land

Many tribes regarded the lands that became Yellowstone National Park as sacred. A Nez Perce historian, Adeline Fredin, recalled her grandparents telling about a long trip to Yellowstone to pray, bathe, and sweat. According to Fredin's letter, "it was one place where the Great Spirit existed and we could bathe the body and spirit directly." She said that the "geysers/hot springs sites were a ceremonial and religious part in our history" and the Nez Perce went to Yellowstone to purify their bodies and souls.

One of Hultkrantz's sources told him that "the Indians prayed to the geysers because there were spirits inside them." Another said that his grandfather, Tavonasia, and his band "raised their tents close to the Firehole Geyser Basin... The men themselves bathed in the geysers whilst they directed their prayers to the spirits." They approached the geysers, hot springs, and thermal features with an attitude of reverence and prayed to the spirits present for assistance on vision quests.

According to ethnographic accounts, a vision quest is a special rite for many tribes in which the Indians go alone to the



*Max Big Man and his daughter, Myrtle, of the Crow Tribe, in front of Giant Geyser, 1933. In the 1920s and 30s, Max made presentations to park visitors about how the Crow lived "in the old days." NPS photo.*



*Unidentified Native American family at the Upper Geyser Basin, circa 1930. NPS photo.*

wilderness to pray and fast, asking assistance from the Spirit World. They believe that if the petitioner is sincere and respectful, the Spirit World may bestow a vision or dream carrying the power of the spirit benefactor. Referred to as one's "medicine," this may include the power to heal or to foresee future events, or strength in war. Like Hultkrantz's sources, Wise identified Yellowstone as an area the Shoshone and Bannock used for vision questing; he said that Yellowstone's thermal basins contained especially powerful spirits in Shoshone cosmology. These spirits were revered, and one would be careful not to insult them. They were powerful, but also potentially helpful. Deference and respect were important.

For example, even when just passing through the region, the Shoshone and Bannock offered their pipes in prayer, and they left gifts when petitioning or thanking the spirit world. Wise explained that these gifts were objects of value such as tobacco that was left on the ground or smoked. This information clarifies the passage in DeSmet's letter that refers to "the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits" presented by the Indians. Arrowheads were left beside or in a hot spring, Wise noted, "to receive the value of this spring." This is a possible explanation for an arrowhead that Marler found while cleaning a hot spring in the Firehole Geyser Basin in 1959. (The spring is now known as Arrowhead Spring.)

The Blackfeet did not come to Yel-

lowstone to vision quest or fast because they preferred the region surrounding Glacier National Park and the Two Medicine wilderness. However, George Kicking Woman maintained that "the Blackfeet don't bother things like that, if they think they're sacred to them people, they won't bother them." Knowing it was sacred to others, the Blackfeet respected Yellowstone, and when traveling through the region, they stopped to offer their pipes in prayer or leave tobacco. Kicking Woman noted that prayers were especially said for a safe journey on the dangerous trip.

Chief Plenty-Coups of the Crow told of a medicine man, The Fringe, who received his power from a hot spring. Located in the Bighorn Basin, this was probably the large spring at Thermopolis. On the third day of a vision quest, The Fringe disappeared on an island in the spring; later he related that his spirit guide took him to his home below where he received instruction. After that, when the Crow passed this spring, they dropped in beads or something pretty for "the dream father" of The Fringe, and they may have approached Yellowstone in a similar spirit in the nineteenth century. During his ethnographic overview of Yellowstone National Park, Peter Nabokov uncovered evidence that The Fringe also came to Yellowstone to fast.

More distant tribes shared the perception of Yellowstone as a sacred place. Stories that place the Assiniboiné in the

Yellowstone region also mention prayer and the offering of the pipe. According to legend, Walking Bull, a noted Assiniboiné chief, was mystified by the geysers when he came upon them during a personal trek. In a 1991 interview, Otto Cantrell, also known as Chief Bluebird, said that he believed Walking Bull would have sought the geysers' meaning with prayer, because the Assiniboiné believe all things to have meaning, but only the Creator can reveal it.

There are stories relating how native peoples set aside their animosities around hot springs in Apache and Ute territory, as well as in Yellowstone. Although this practice may have been more honored in the breach, the belief that intertribal warfare was not supposed to be brought to regions containing hot springs supports the idea that Yellowstone was sacred land to Native Americans. Fredin asserted that at Yellowstone hostilities were left outside the area. Wise spoke of Yellowstone as a neutral ground and contended that as they came for purposes other than warfare, tribes never fought each other here. The Haynes 1890 guidebook mentions the legend that Obsidian Cliff was neutral ground to all Rocky Mountain Indians. Although Native Americans and trappers did fight in the park, only one account exists of a battle between tribes. It is supposed to have taken place on Three Rivers Peak, away from the geyser basins, and the account cannot be verified.

In Mircea Eliade's book, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, the French historian of religions observed that "for religious man, nature is never only 'natural': it is always fraught with a religious value...it spontaneously reveals the many aspects of the sacred." According to Kevin Locke, a Lakota Baha'i well-versed in the oral traditions of his people, "the pre-eminence of the Yellowstone basin as a site of particular spiritual potency invoking awe, wonderment and spiritual upliftment for thousands of years is indisputable." Although his claim might trouble historians demanding documentation in the European tradition, knowing the ways of his people, Locke could see no other explanation. And this sense of awe and inspiration has also been found among Euro-Americans who have vis-

ited Yellowstone. Thomas Moran, the landscape painter who accompanied the Hayden expedition, captured this wonderment in paintings and sketches that many find inspiring today.

Keeping these insights in mind, the reaction of the Pend d'Oreille to the geysers in 1834 reported by Warren Ferris may be interpreted as a spiritual response, not fear. When he arrived there with the Indians, Ferris was reckless in his enthusiasm to explore, given the dangers posed by the thin crust covering the geyser basins. Thus, historians should construe the attitude of the Pend d'Oreille as wisdom and reverence. Ferris did not say that they were afraid of the geysers, but that they found his actions "appalling." Because geysers and hot springs were sacred, they may have considered Ferris's wantonly approaching them offensive. Many see Ferris's account, according to which one of the Indians "remarked that hell, of which he had heard from the whites, must be in the vicinity," as evidence that Indians believed geysers were the abode of evil spirits. A careful reading of his quote, however, reveals that this was not a native belief. It shows that the Pend d'Oreille had learned the term "hell" from Euro-Americans and applied it here as a way to communicate their thoughts to a non-Indian.

What emerges concerning Indian attitudes toward Yellowstone's geysers is a complex world view. What is clear is that the thermal wonders of Yellowstone did not terrify all, or even most, American Indians. At least some, and perhaps many, American Indians revered the region and treated it as they did other sacred lands. Euro-Americans originated the idea that Indians "feared" Yellowstone and it must be dispelled to understand the true nature of Yellowstone's Indian past. First and foremost, many Native Americans treated Yellowstone as a special region, a sacred land. They approached the geysers with reverence and respect, but this did not preclude them from using the hot waters for utilitarian purposes. They came to pray and to seek inspiration to guide them through life. As an area of profound mystery and inspiration, Yellowstone was a special place to its first visitors—as it is to thousands of visitors today. 🌿



*Joseph Owen Weixelman earned a B.A. in anthropology from the University of Colorado and an M.A. in history from Montana State University. This article is drawn from a paper by the author, "The Power to Evoke Wonder: Native Americans and the Geysers of Yellowstone National Park," that is on file in the Department of History and Philosophy, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, and in the Yellowstone National Park Research Library in Mammoth, Wyoming. It also draws on a more recent version of the paper that was presented by the author at the Fourth Biennial Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, "People and Place: The Human Experience in Greater Yellowstone," Mammoth Hot Springs, October 14, 1997. Weixelman has worked as a ranger at Mesa Verde National Park, Petroglyph National Monument, and Yellowstone. During the summer of 1998, he researched the Bannock Trail and worked on tribal issues related to the park. He is currently a doctoral student at the University of New Mexico, where his dissertation is a history of Pueblo Indians and their relationship to the Pueblo heritage parks of the Southwest.*

*Yellowstone Science* would like to thank Rosemary Sucec, cultural anthropologist, and Jon Dahlheim, museum technician, for their assistance in locating photos and writing captions for this article.

## Bibliographic Essay - For Further Reading

The sources consulted for this study were numerous. Unfortunately, space constraints did not allow for comprehensive footnotes. The following sources were consulted in general and the editors of *Yellowstone Science* can be contacted for the citation to any specific reference.

Of course, any study of Yellowstone's history must begin with Aubrey L. Haines' classic two volume history entitled *The Yellowstone Story: A History of Our First National Park* (Yellowstone National Park: Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1977). His earlier study, *Yellowstone National Park, Its Exploration and Establishment* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1974), was also extremely useful. A historiography of Yellowstone history must include Hiram Martin Chittenden's *The Yellowstone National Park*, edited by Richard A. Bartlett (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1964) and other histories consulted included Eugene Sayre Topping, *The Chronicles of the Yellowstone: An Accurate, Comprehensive History* (St. Paul: Pioneer Press Co., 1888), James M. Hamilton, *History of Yellowstone National Park* (Previous to 1895) (Yellowstone Park: Typed by Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, c. 1933), William Turrentine Jackson, *The Early Exploration and Founding of Yellowstone National Park* (Austin: University of Texas, June 1940), and Merrill D. Beal, *The Story of Man in Yellowstone* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1949). Most of these historians repeated the assertion that Indians feared Yellowstone's thermal wonders, but the more recent ones, including Aubrey Haines, questioned its accuracy.

The interpretation that Indians feared the geysers was championed by Ake Hultkrantz in "The Indians and the Wonders of Yellowstone: A Study of the Interrelations of Reli-



gion, Nature and Culture" *Ethnos* 1 (1954). This article later became a chapter in *Belief and Worship in Native North America*, edited by Christopher Vecsey (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981). He divided the Indians who utilized the resources of the Yellowstone region into three major cultural types and this analysis can be found in "The Indians in Yellowstone Park," *Annals of Wyoming*, 29: 3 (Oct. 1957). Hultkrantz based his research on sources which, by his own admission, are not rich or diverse, coming mostly from the Shoshone. His analysis of the sources appears in "The Fear of Geysers Among Indians of the Yellowstone Park Area," in *Lifeways of Intermountain and Plains Montana Indians*, ed. Leslie B. Davis, (Bozeman: Montana State University, 1979).

Other writers who have written on Indians in Yellowstone include Joel C. Janetski, with his popular book *Indians of Yellowstone Park* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987) and the comprehensive report by Peter Nabokov and Larry Loendorf. This last study took four years to complete and this article's author assisted them where he could. The study took place in the mid-1990s and their report will go a long way in correcting what is known about the use of Yellowstone National Park by native peoples. Their results were reported by Nabokov in "Reintroducing the Indian: Observations of a Yellowstone Amateur," *The Aubrey L. Haines Lecture* at the Fourth Biennial Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, *People and Place: The Human Experience in Greater Yellowstone*, Mammoth Hot Springs, on Oct. 13, 1997. In addition, the draft of their report, *American Indians and Yellowstone National Park: A Documentary Overview*, has been accepted for publication by the University of Oklahoma Press.

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*of Wyoming* 36 (1964), and Sven Liljeblad, "Indian Peoples in Idaho," (manuscript on file, Pocatello: Idaho State University, Aug. 1957). Information on the Shoshone came from Brigham D. Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1980) and Virginia Cole Trenholm and Maurine Carley, *The Shoshonis: Sentinels of the Rockies*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964). Information on the Crow came from Edwin Thompson Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, edited by John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), Rodney Frey, *The World of the Crow Indians: As Driftwood Lodges* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), Frederick E. Hoxie, *Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America, 1805-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Peter Nabokov, *Two Leggings: The Making of a Crow Warrior* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967). Information on the Blackfeet came from Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail or Life, Legends and Religion on the Blackfeet Indians* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1910) and from Malchcolm McFee, *Modern Blackfeet: Montanans on a Reservation. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972). Knowledge of the Nez Perce came from Lucullus V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1940), Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) and William E. Kearns, "A Nez Perce Chief Revisits Yellowstone," *Yellowstone Nature Notes* 12 (June-July, 1935). Information on other tribes came from Robert Spencer, et al. *The Native Americans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

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Nathaniel Pitt Langford, *The Discovery of Yellowstone Park: Journal of the Washburn Expedition to the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers in the Year 1870* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), Lt. Gustavus Cheyney Doane, "Official Report of the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition into the Upper Yellowstone in 1870," (Collection 492, Burlingame Special Collections, Renne Library, Montana State University, Bozeman), and Ferdinand V. Hayden, "The Hot Springs and Geysers of the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers," *The American Journal of Science and Arts* (February 1872).

Archaeological and geological reports consulted include J. Jacob Hoffman's "The Yellowstone Park Survey," *Archaeology in Montana* (Summer 1958) and "A Preliminary Archaeological Survey of Yellowstone National Park" (Master's Thesis, Montana State University, Bozeman, 1961), Carling Malouf's two articles in *Archeology in Montana*, "The Old Indian Trail" (March, 1962) and "Historic Tribes and Archaeology" (January-March, 1967) and his "Preliminary Report, Yellowstone National Park Archeological Survey" (Unpublished Paper, University of Montana, Missoula, Summer, 1958), and George Marler's *Inventory of Thermal Features of the Firehole River Geyser Basins and Other Selected Areas of Yellowstone National Park* (Report for the U.S. Geological Survey, 1973, Unpublished manuscript, Yellowstone Research Library, Mammoth).

And most importantly, oral histories were collected from the Shoshone, the Blackfeet, and the Assiniboiné between September 1991 and January 1992. Copies of these oral histories have been deposited with the Yellowstone Research Library in Mammoth. Other tribal cultural preservation officers, historians, and archivists assisted me through letters and phone interviews. Copies of these letters and notes have also been donated to the Yellowstone Research Library.



# Introducing the Davis Collection

## Interview with Susan and Jack Davis

*Yellowstone devotees throughout the country, and indeed around the world, know the name Davis. The Davis Collection of Yellowstone National Park historic memorabilia has become legendary among the growing numbers of people who collect materials relating to the world's first national park. Susan and Jack Davis have devoted their lives to acquiring, organizing, researching, and upgrading the most complete privately held collection of park memorabilia known to exist.*

*Recently, the park acquired the majority of the Davis Collection with the help of the Yellowstone Park Foundation and through the generosity of the Davises, who donated thousands of additional items. The foundation's effort is just another excellent example of the work it is doing to further the goals of Yellowstone National Park. Board member Ron Lerner raised the necessary funds to bring this important part of the Yellowstone story home to the park.*

*With time, the Davis Collection will reside in the new Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center, proposed to be located near the park's North Entrance. This approximately 32,000 square foot facility will provide an adequate home for Yellowstone's museum, library, and archival collections and will easily accommodate the Davis Collection, ensuring it is well cared for and made accessible to those wishing to learn more about the park's history.*

*In October 2001, Yellowstone Science editor, Roger Anderson, and park archivist, Lee Whittlesey, sat down with Susan and Jack to discuss the significance of the park's recent acquisition of their collection and explore their love for all things Yellowstone.*

Susan Delin Davis graduated from Montana State University with a B.S. in art, with an emphasis in graphic design. She was born and raised in Bozeman, Montana, near the Gallatin Gateway entrance to Yellowstone.

Jack Davis was born in Lamesa, Texas. He studied political science at the University of California at Santa Barbara and environmental science at the University of California at Davis.

Susan and Jack Davis own Olde America Antiques in Bozeman, Montana. They have also owned and operated a building maintenance company there for 24 years. Collecting Yellowstone memorabilia is an avocation for the Davises. They are members of the International Federation of Postcard Dealers, and have collected Yellowstone Park antiques and postcards for more than 34 years. They have also written and published a series of newsletters on collecting Yellowstone Park antiques and postcards.

Susan and Jack make their home in the foothills outside Bozeman and have two sons, Tate and Wade.

**YS:** Susan and Jack, tell us a little bit about yourselves, your backgrounds, your association with the Yellowstone area, and how you got interested in collecting Yellowstone memorabilia.

**SD:** I was born and raised in Bozeman and my parents used to take us to the park as kids all the time. My father was in charge of building the roads at Big Sky in the early 1950s, so we spent a lot of summers at the B Bar K Ranch, which is now the Lone Mountain Guest Ranch. When I graduated from high school, I spent two summers working in West Yellowstone, one summer at the Dairy Queen and the other at the Teepee Motel, but all of my time off was spent in the park with friends.

**YS:** How old were you during those summers?

**SD:** 17 and 18. That's when I started collecting, the first summer out of high school. My older sister also worked in West Yellowstone, for Eagle's store. She

worked there for five summers and met her husband, so my whole family had a true love for the place.

**YS:** I was going to ask, of all the wonderful national parks there are, why you chose Yellowstone, but it's pretty obvious. Yellowstone's your backyard. It was your home, in a sense.

**SD:** Yes, it was. Going to the park so many times while growing up, I developed a lifelong love of Yellowstone. I started collecting things because my family has a collector mentality. My parents saved old things. My sisters and I used to tell them that if they brought anything else old into the house, we were going to move! That was when we were in junior high and high school, before we were able to appreciate collecting ourselves.

**YS:** You must have had a pretty deep feeling, if it started at 17!

**SD:** My friends even realized it, so they started giving me things. My best friend gave me a Yellowstone apron. That was one of the first gifts I was given and it just grew from there. When I married Jack, our interest in this hobby exploded!

**YS:** Susan and Jack, your collection is numbered at more than 20,000 items and is recognized as the single largest, and easily one of the most significant, related to Yellowstone. Can you elaborate a little bit on the extent and the variety of the collection?

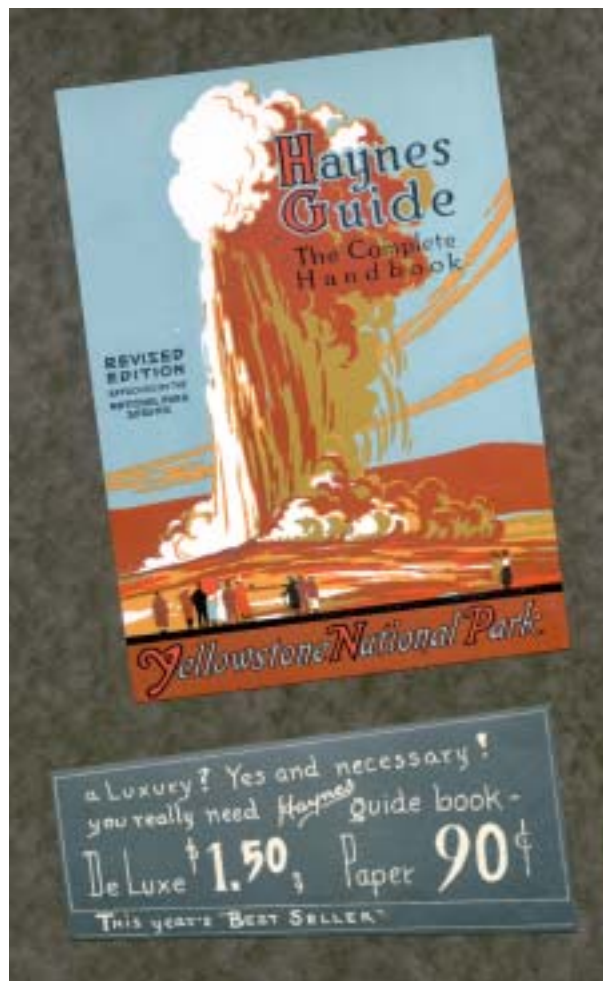
**JD:** For purposes of dealing with the collection, we've broken it into categories. We came up with between twelve and fifteen, depending on how specific you wanted to be, just to be able to manage it and catalog it.

**YS:** Why don't you run through some of those categories for us?

**JD:** The largest single category we have is postcards. That category will be going to the park at a later date, because we haven't been able to catalog it yet. Beyond postcards, which are about half of the collection in numbers, we have stereoviews, small and large photographs, guidebooks, maps, and a general book collection that includes everything from literature to children's books to histories to narratives to reference books. Brochures and pamphlets are a category of their own. There's a tremendous amount of material, which doesn't really have a specific definition, which we refer to as miscellaneous publications. Ephemera is a really interesting category and one of our favorites.

**YS:** Explain what "ephemera" is?

**JD:** Ephemera are printed materials that



*The Davis Collection contains a diverse amount of Yellowstone-related advertising including this original paste-up of an ad for the Haynes Guide Book, circa 1930s.*



weren't meant to last a long time, but for one reason or another, survived. Some examples of Yellowstone Park ephemera are menus, letters and letterheads, some types of advertising, checks and invoices, tickets, labels, stickers, and decals. Ephemeral paper reflects a glimpse of life in the past and sometimes contains valuable information not found anywhere else.

Then there are small prints, large prints, lithographs, and posters. Advertising is another interesting category. Technically, it's two different groups of items. It's material that advertises Yellowstone Park and it's also material that uses Yellowstone to advertise products, such as Yellowstone whiskey or Yellowstone coffee. Original artwork is perhaps the weakest category in our collection and it is usually the most expensive to collect. If we had one Moran or one Bierstadt painting, it could easily equal or exceed the value of all the other 20,000 items in our collection.

We also have a Haynes-related category, which is material that would be related to the Haynes family or businesses. A lot of these items came from the Haynes estate. When Isabel Haynes died in 1993, we tried to acquire and keep as much of their personal park-related collection together

as we could, because we felt that if we didn't, it would be a lost opportunity. We were able to acquire at least examples of most of the Haynes family collection, which we were very happy about. I think that's going to be a very important part of our collection going to the park. The last category that we would identify would be souvenirs, which is a fun category. It's probably the most difficult group of items to collect of all of the categories.

**YS:** Why is that?

**JD:** Because you can find collections of stereoviews, you can find collections of brochures, or collections of postcards and small prints, but souvenirs, you generally find one at a time. We spent one entire day in an antique mall outside of Seattle, and at the end of the day, all we'd found was a paperweight. That was our find for the day. It literally takes years to acquire souvenirs and you never know what you're going to find, or where you're going to find them. That's a general overview of the collection.

**YS:** You mentioned that postcards comprise about half of the collection. I know

that you're members of the International Federation of Postcard Dealers and I recall that, for many years, you also sponsored the National Park Antique and Paper Show. Could you tell us a little more about that and what it entailed?

**SD:** We sponsored the National Park Antique and Paper Show for six years. We felt we'd gone as far as we could as general collectors, so we became dealers and then put the show on. This gave us the opportunity to deal more closely with people who could find Yellowstone items for us. It also brought quite a bit of material into the area that we probably never would have had access to or seen before. Each year, the show gained more favor and importance with the collectors and dealers in the area and outside the area also. We had collectors come in from eight or nine states for the show. Unfortunately, we had to quit doing it because I had heart surgery, so our hobby was killing us! I decided we wouldn't let that happen. Shortly after that, the Internet gained such favor that I really don't think our next show would have been anywhere near the quality that we'd been used to having.

**JD:** If you wanted to identify the Golden Age of collecting Yellowstone Park antiques, it would be from 1988 to 1998. The reason for this is that in 1988, the fires sparked worldwide interest in the park and international media coverage. So here's this very vulnerable entity that could be lost, and suddenly it became valuable. Objects relating to the history of the park, especially images and souvenirs, became very desirable. So 1988 was a turning point in collecting Yellowstone



*Original watercolor design, The Haynes Studio Christmas Greeting, 1925. The Haynes Studio brought "Yellowstone National Park to all the world" through their postcards, photographs, guide books, and other souvenirs.*



*Examples of Yellowstone Park ephemera: Luggage sticker, Lander-Yellowstone Transportation Company, circa 1920s. Poster stamp, Panama Pacific International Exposition (San Francisco), Union Pacific Railroad, 1915.*

items. The next ten years were the Golden Age of collecting Yellowstone Park antiques because a lot of items came out of private collections and private estates and became available on the open market, usually at shows, shops, or malls. 1998 was the last year that we did the national park show and it was also the beginning of the Internet era. The traditional way of buying and selling antiques had begun to change by that time.

**YS:** How do you think the advent of the Internet would have affected your ability to do what you've done over the years, had it been in existence earlier?

**JD:** If we had had to acquire our collection piece by piece over the Internet, it would not have been possible. Plus, we couldn't have afforded it.

**SD:** Up until the Internet, we basically bought everything and anything that we came across. Dealers knew that we would buy almost anything relating to Yellowstone. So if they got something, they'd call us up because we were the only ones that were buying in such great quantities.

**JD:** We established a reputation among dealers throughout the country and internationally, especially after we started our national parks show. So we were kind of the magnet for Yellowstone antiques for a period of time. We acquired a tremendous amount of material, including some very important pieces in our collection, like the first known photograph of the Army in the park. We were the first ones to have an opportunity to buy that photograph and we didn't hesitate to do so.

**SD:** That was what the show allowed us to do. The dealers would save Yellowstone material and offer it to us first. Then, if we didn't buy it, it would be offered for sale to the public.

**JD:** It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but it might have been the last chance to do that. Today, we wouldn't be able to acquire a lot of those items because of the competition.

**YS:** Would you say the Internet not only increased the prices but also the competition?

**JD:** Absolutely. There are more collectors today than there used to be and they all compete for the same material. So it's not like you have an opportunity to

go and ferret out something in a box of miscellaneous material. Now you have this identified piece that goes on the Internet and numerous people bid on it.

**YS:** So collecting used to be a secret treasure hunt as opposed to today's international auction.

**JD:** That's exactly what it was. It was a treasure hunt and it was fun to go and find these things. Now it's become a competition as to what you can acquire and that really doesn't interest us. There was a lot of camaraderie during that time. If you had duplicates of items, you would trade them for pieces that you didn't have. We still maintain friendships with many collectors and many dealers, but the nature of buying and selling antiques has changed.

**YS:** Susan, let's get back to your time as a 17-year old in the park. Can you recall the first item that you acquired?

**SD:** That was 34 years ago, but I think it was a box of 50 Haynes postcards that I purchased at a little antique shop in Fromberg, Montana.

**YS:** At what point would you have described yourself as a collector? When did you make the transition from just buying a souvenir or a box of postcards, like we all do, to collecting and acquiring as a real passion?

**SD:** Probably when I married Jack. He's a real driven person and I think with the

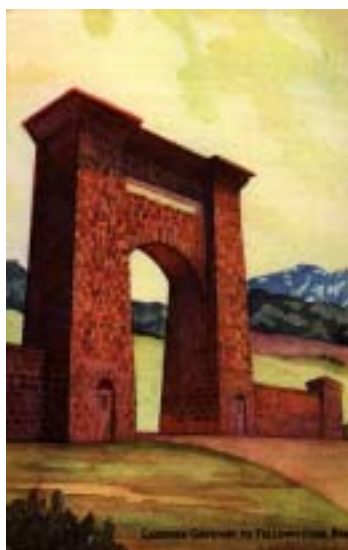
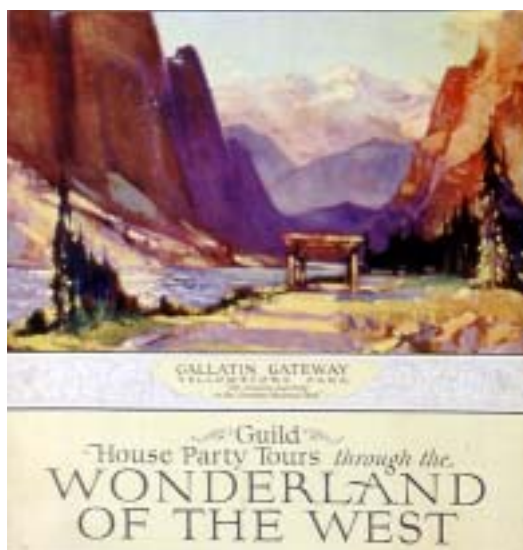


*Arts and Crafts book cover design, Elbert and Alice Hubbard, circa 1920s. Included in the Davis Collection are several first editions, limited editions, books signed or inscribed by the author, and privately printed books.*



*Possibly the first photo of the U.S. Army at Mammoth, taken by A.M. Giddings, 1886 (after August 17). Boudoir views, 5.25 x 8.5 inches, such as this are one of the most collectible of small-format photos. They are early albumen photographs produced from the 1870s through the 1890s. The Davis Collection includes more than 100 Boudoir views of the park.*





*Gallatin Gateway to Yellowstone National Park, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railway booklet, circa 1930 (left), and a postcard of the Gardiner Gateway to Yellowstone Park (right). Gustave Krollman, circa, 1936.*

two of us together, our interest in this hobby grew.

**JD:** You've got to have money to be a collector. Prior to getting married, we were starting our maintenance business and didn't have much discretionary income. So this synergy created a little more spending money each month. It did take both of us. It's an expensive hobby.

**SD:** Jack didn't collect when I married him. But I started dragging him to these places and he liked books a lot. He would look at books while I looked at everything else and the collection bug got him, too.

**JD:** It was a two-person job, literally, to generate the extra income and then to search for these items.

**YS:** By no means do you appear to be a reluctant collector!

**JD:** No, as Susan mentioned, I collected books prior to marrying her. I had absolutely no money, so I used to clean the homes of elderly ladies. They would give me books to clean their carpets and wash their windows. I had a small collection. When I married Sue, the focus became Yellowstone, so suddenly there was a theme to the collecting and it became more organized.

**SD:** For a while you collected Glacier items.

**JD:** I did have a small Glacier collection. I sold it all at one of our first national parks shows and I've never been able to

acquire any of those items since. One thing that makes collecting Yellowstone Park antiques and memorabilia so interesting is that Yellowstone is the oldest national park in the world. The history of Yellowstone transcends different eras of photography and printing and souvenir manufacturing, including the Golden Age of Souvenirs. There's a very wide range of vintage material relating to this park over a long period of time. By collecting Yellowstone antiques, you develop an awareness of social history. If you collect Glacier Park items, for instance, you miss almost 40 years of that. There are no early albumen (eggshell finish) photographs or pre-1890 flat-mount stereoviews, because Glacier was established as a national park after these were popular. The only other national park that would approach Yellowstone in the diversity and range of antiques and collectibles would be Yosemite. Through our experience as collectors and dealers, Susan and I are convinced that Yellowstone is the most collected national park in the world. Much of the interest in collecting Yellowstone antiques is due to the tremendous range and amount of material that was produced for the park.

**YS:** Can you explain what you mean by "Golden Age of Souvenirs?"

**JD:** First, there was the Pioneer Era, which technically is pre-1900. Souvenirs of Yellowstone from the Pioneer Era are

*Assorted stereoviews and a stereoscope, circa 1870s–1920s. The collection contains more than 1,300 Yellowstone stereoviews, including a large number of rare images and several complete box sets.*

quite rare. There are two main souvenirs from this age (other than early photographs and stereoviews), the coated specimens and the sand specimens. There are specimens that would even precede these which were pieces of geyserite that were taken out of the park. The Golden Age of souvenirs and postcards would be from around the turn of the century through World War I. The very finest, highest quality souvenirs of the park were sold during that time, including hand-painted pieces from France and Germany, china and brass items, plates, paperweights, letter openers, jewelry, sterling silver pieces, etc. The people who were traveling through the park during that time were the carriage class. They were primarily well to do people, so this is another snapshot of social history. The souvenirs and artifacts sold in the park during this period reflect who was in the park. By the 1920s, you could no longer find high-quality European souvenirs or postcards for sale in the park.

**YS:** That is when the park became democratized.

**JD:** Several events happened at about the same time to bring an end to the Golden Age of souvenirs and postcards. The National Park Service was established in 1916 and the park was opened to motorized transportation. An even bigger event that took place at this time was World War I, which forever changed the relationships of countries throughout the world and changed the world's economy. Suddenly, the souvenirs and postcards sold in and around Yellowstone were made in (North) America. They were no longer imported from Europe.

**YS:** What you're getting at, then, is if you look at your collection and the history of Yellowstone memorabilia, they really tell the story of the human experience and how it's unfolded here from 1872 with the park's creation to the present day.

**SD:** Yes, and that's why we promoted our collection to the park, because it's a history of the visitor experience. Up until recently, I don't think any museum has focused primarily on that aspect of the park's history.

**YS:** I remember, some years ago, visiting with you and marveling at the collection you had in your shop. You said, "You should see our house!"

**SD:** Until just a few weeks ago, it was crammed to the gills with as much stuff as we could display. At first, it was mostly just downstairs, and then it crept upstairs and into all the cupboards, display cabinets, and shelves that we have. It made for a very nice, cozy atmosphere. We lived with all of our park antiques and enjoyed them for all those years. Our kids would remark that it was like living in a museum growing up. Once they moved out of the house to go to college, then their rooms became Yellowstone rooms also! The walls were taken over with pictures and photos.

**JD:** We've tried to keep at least one example of everything that we have purchased through the years in our collection. So the park is literally getting one of each item that we have had a chance to acquire.

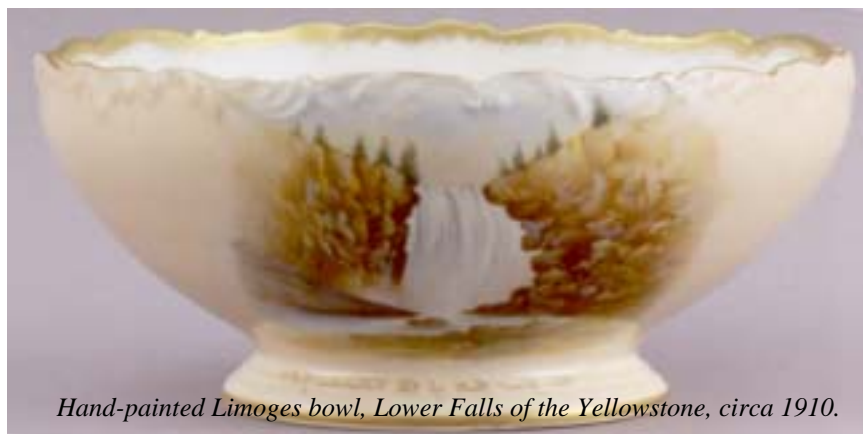
**YS:** You also attempted to swap items in order to upgrade the quality.

**JD:** That was a big part of what we tried to do. We were told early in our collecting, by dealers, to always try and upgrade the condition of the pieces we collected. That was a major effort on our part. Many collectors will acquire one item and then they don't acquire that item again. We were constantly upgrading.

**SD:** We had a collector at the house one time looking at a brochure rack filled with brochures. He made the comment that they looked like they had just come off the presses, and I said, "It took us years and years of upgrading these items to get them to this point. They didn't just start that way."

**YS:** Do you have some favorite items?

**SD:** I've been asked that a lot of times. I'll



*Hand-painted Limoges bowl, Lower Falls of the Yellowstone, circa 1910.*

say one thing and then I think of about 25 others in each category. The postcards are probably my favorite category. Then you get into dishes where the Limoges china would probably be my favorite. Then I think of the Shaw & Powell dishes and this Cinnabar piece that we just bought. The coated specimens are also favorite pieces. We have three; two horseshoes and an inkwell. These are the first souvenirs of the park. Tourists would soak objects in the Mammoth Hot Springs to coat them with mineral deposits. The practice was soon outlawed, so these items are particularly rare and hard to find.

**JD:** We got a call once from a woman in Chicago who saw our collection on the television show, FX Collectibles. She said she had this kind of weird, crazy thing and she wanted to know if we would be interested in it. We finally figured out it was a coated specimen and we were thrilled. We paid her more than she asked and it was worth the whole experience.

**YS:** Was that one of the horseshoes, or the inkwell?

**JD:** One of the horseshoes.

**SD:** The inkwell was the first coated specimen I got. We were in Billings at



*Northern Pacific Railroad brochures: Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland, 1884 (above) and the back and front covers of A Romance of Wonderland, 1882 (right). The Davis Collection includes numerous brochures and pamphlets, many of which are rare or hard to find. These brochures are some of the earliest on the park, containing beautiful lithographic images.*





one of the antique malls. We had gone through the whole place and when I got near the very last booth by the door, all of a sudden I yelled, “I found one! I found one!” I had found a coated specimen, and no one, of course, knew what it was. They had a tag on it that said “90-year old inkwell.” It looked like a horrible, ugly thing that was covered with rock.

**YS:** That’s what astonishes me when I think of the great volume of material you’ve acquired over the years. Where do you find some of the rarest items? It’s almost like every piece has its own story.

**JD:** It does. That’s the thing that’s fun about collecting. We can almost remember where we acquired each item. Almost.

**YS:** Why do you think some of these pieces didn’t survive in greater numbers?

**JD:** If you think about it, here’s a family that purchases a hand-painted Limoges bowl and they take it on the stagecoach through the park. Then they go back to Salt Lake City and get on a train and go to Omaha, Nebraska where they end up transferring to New York City. Here’s this fragile piece of china. It amazes me that it even survived to begin with.

**YS:** What do you consider the most historically significant, or interesting item in the collection?

**JD:** People collect for different reasons, and they collect different things, and they collect in different ways, but if you ask about important pieces, I think photographs are probably the most historically significant. We have a photograph that is believed to be the earliest photo taken of the Army in the park. Two Thomas Hine stereoviews are also in our collection. His photographs are among the first taken of the park. Hine was a photographer who accompanied Captain Barlow in exploring the headwaters of the Yellowstone River in 1871. Three weeks after his return to Chicago from Yellowstone, all but 16 of his 200 negatives were destroyed in the Chicago fire. Of these, seven were found in the New-York Historical Society Collection. We have the only other two known to exist and we’re donating these to the park. Out of more than 20,000 items, the two Hine stereoviews are the most important in our collection. I don’t think there’s any argu-

ment over that.

**YS:** How about rarest?

**JD:** Some of the ephemera are really rare. We recently acquired a circa 1909 Klamer catalog which lists the souvenirs that were for sale in the Upper Geyser Basin curio store. This is an important document because it lists the items that tourists could buy at that time, including a wide variety of Indian souvenirs and artifacts. This is very interesting and it raises the question of where these Indian pieces came from and why they were being sold in the park. There are a number of other rare printed items in our collection that contain information that can’t be found anywhere else. The Klamer catalog is an example of a rare publication and is, to me, one of the most interesting items we have.

**YS:** And it’s certainly one of the rarest.

**SD:** Another semi-rare item would be our autographed Buffalo Bill postcard of the Cody Entrance to Yellowstone.

**JD:** It’s the most expensive postcard we have.

**YS:** Signed by...

**JD:** Buffalo Bill in 1916. We’ve found out that he gave them away at a rodeo. They’re rare, but you’ve got to qualify these things. We’ve heard of another one that still exists, so now there are at least two.

**YS:** On a personal note, when you look at all these items that you’ve assembled throughout the years, what do they mean to you?

**SD:** They are a big part of my life. Many, many hours were spent hunting for them and living with them. They were like a child, I guess—a really big child—that took over our lives! The thrill of the hunt is the thing that you don’t get when buying items on the Internet, the digging in a box under a table somewhere and discovering an obscure and previously unknown item.

**YS:** Like that all-day spent in Seattle for the paperweight.

**SD:** That’s what the collector mentality is all about. There are some people who don’t collect anything. They don’t have that yen to go find something and experience the thrill of finding it.

**JD:** It has nothing to do with money. It has to do with this exciting chance to find something.

**YS:** It’s that chance discovery of something that you truly love. After all your years of collecting, why at this time have you decided to part with the collection?

**JD:** One of the reasons is that we can’t or don’t want to compete with many of the people who are collecting.

**SD:** There are quite a few different reasons. A major one is that the large numbers of items in our home were getting unmanageable.

**JD:** Something had to be done with the collection.

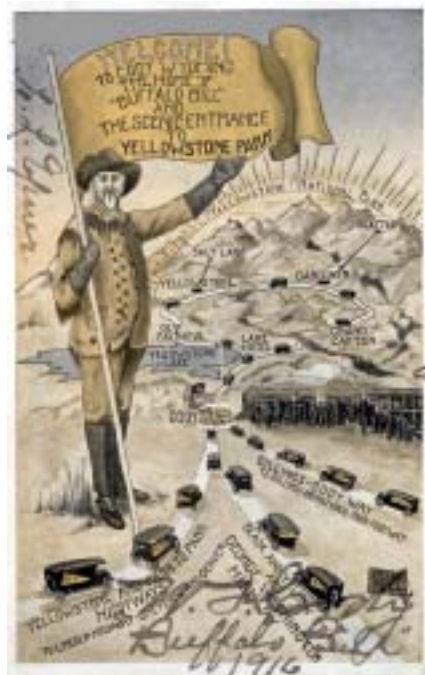
**SD:** I’ve always wanted it to go to the park, but I knew they didn’t have anywhere to put it. Then there was the possibility of the new Heritage and Research Center. My main criteria was that the collection stay together.

**JD:** We don’t have the resources to curate the collection. It was becoming unmanageable and there were very few places that it could go to be curated. The federal government is going to be able to do it. I couldn’t conceive that some of the individuals that approached us would have been able or willing to curate the whole collection.

**SD:** Also, it’s very nice to be able to share it with others who love the park.

**YS:** There must be a lot of personal satisfaction associated with that.

**JD:** It was a huge relief, actually. There



Poster postcard by Burlington Railroad, signed by William F. Cody, 1916.



*Very rare Wittich Guides to Yellowstone Park, Livingston, Montana, 1889-90.*

*Original  
serigraph—  
Greetings  
Yellowstone  
Park, Ralston,  
circa 1935.*



was a tremendous amount of work involved in organizing all of this material.

**YS:** Who in the park, would you say, was instrumental in seeing that the collection didn't go to one of these individuals you mentioned, but came instead to Yellowstone National Park where it will reside?

**SD:** The first person that comes to mind is Susan Kraft, the park curator, then Lee Whittlesey, the park archivist, and former Superintendent Mike Finley. They are the three people we want to mention first and foremost. We worked with Susan Kraft very closely and she helped us tremendously in working with the Yellowstone Park Foundation. She was the first one who presented our collection to the foundation at their meeting a few years ago. She's come to our house and showed us how to catalog everything.

**JD:** We joke that you could call this the "Susan" collection because of Susan Davis and Susan Kraft and I think that's appropriate. Susan Kraft was critical to the park's acquisition of our collection. She was, far and away, the most important person involved. Lee was knowledgeable enough that he recognized it was important. Mike Finley was in a position to promote the acquisition of the collection and also to support the establishment of the Yellowstone Park Foundation, which was critical. But categorically, without Susan Kraft's involvement, it might not have happened. We can't give her enough credit.

**YS:** When did the Yellowstone Park Foundation get involved?

**JD:** Almost not soon enough. There were some other institutions and private indi-

viduals that were interested and we were getting to a point at which we had to do something.

**YS:** That brings up a point. You probably could have sold this for much more than you did.

**JD:** We had an offer from an individual approaching a million dollars. We don't know who it was.

**SD:** His representative was working with a dealer that we dealt with.

**JD:** It's public knowledge that we sold the collection to the foundation for \$500,000. We've also donated additional items valued at approximately \$150,000. Another donation Susan and I have made is the cataloging of about 3,000 individual items in our collection, saving the park approximately \$21,000. We intend to work with the foundation in the future to acquire our postcard collection of more than 10,000 pieces so that our entire collection can go to the park.

**YS:** Given all that, why did you part with the collection the way you did? Why is it coming to Yellowstone when it could have gone elsewhere?

**SD:** It just goes back to the roots of my whole life I guess—the love of Yellowstone. That's where I wanted it to go.

**JD:** Logistically, the Yellowstone Park Foundation needs to be credited with their ability to raise the funds. That was a big job. The person who did most of that work was Ron Lerner. Without Ron, the acquisition may not have taken place. He deserves a lot of credit for his hard work. There are a number of people involved that, without any of them, it might not have happened. If Lee had

said, "Gee, the collection is not that important, it's not worthy of acquiring," it probably wouldn't have happened. If Mike Finley hadn't supported the creation of the Yellowstone Park Foundation, it probably wouldn't have happened. If Susan Kraft hadn't worked with us as hard as she did and if we didn't have as much faith in her as we did, it might not have happened. If Ron Lerner hadn't gone out and raised the money, it might not have happened. So there are a lot of scenarios that took place and it's kind of serendipitous that it happened at all.

**YS:** What would you like the park to do with the collection?

**SD:** In a perfect world, it would be great to have 95% of it on display, which I know can't happen. Perhaps revolving displays could be used to share the collection with people and to get the history of the human experience out there in addition to the natural history. Natural history is important, too, but that's what everyone else seems to have centered on.

**JD:** What we would also like to see the park do with our collection is to use it as a base to build their acquisitions even more and we're willing to work with them on that. We know other collectors who have material that we don't have which we want to see go to the park. Even small collections are important. Almost invariably, every collection has material that is unique only to it.

**SD:** Another important thing is the research value, to have the collection available to people and also to have it avail-



*The collection contains more than 1,000 small photographs such as this one of employees and staff at the National Hotel, taken by F.J. Haynes, circa 1883. Images such as these have recorded the human experience in the park since its establishment and are some of the most unique and desirable Yellowstone collectibles. Although less common, large format photos, such as shown at left, are also found in the collection. Golden Gate Bridge looking north, by W. Ingersoll, circa 1880s.*

able for other museums to display.

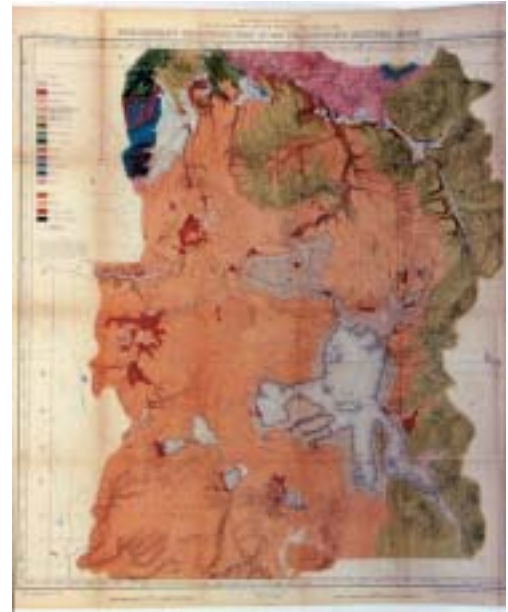
**YS:** Susan and Jack, you're the perfect example of the difference one person, two people in this case, can make. When you bought your first item, way back when, that box of Haynes postcards, did you have any sense of the legacy that you would be creating that you are now leaving to Yellowstone National Park?

**SD:** No, I'm sure I didn't. My roommates used to say, "What in the world are you going to do with this junk." It's very satisfying, personally, to see it going to the park. I had no idea my hobby was going to turn out to be such a huge thing.

**YS:** You do realize you've created a lasting legacy that's going to enrich others through their enjoyment, through the research opportunities it will provide, and through the increased understanding and knowledge it will bring to countless people.

**SD:** That's why, through the years, I

*The collection contains more than 25 rare maps including this hand-colored, Geological Map of Yellowstone National Park, from the 1872 Hayden Survey—12th Annual Report.*



wanted it to go to the park as a whole.

**YS:** That's got to be a good feeling.

**JD:** When you work with people like Lee Whittlesey, Mike Finley, and Susan Kraft, you realize that not only can you read about history, but you can create history. Lee has created history, Mike Finley has created history, Susan Kraft has created history and we are going to follow in their footsteps and create history, too.

**YS:** You certainly have.

**SD:** The collection represents thousands and thousands of hours of looking for things. If you had all the money in the world you couldn't go out and purchase a

collection like this anymore, because you couldn't find it. It takes the time to put it together and to collect the pieces because you can't find them all at once. It just takes those years and years and hours and hours.

**JD:** Susan and I want to state again, for the record, that we're thrilled and honored that our lifelong Yellowstone Park collection is going back to the park, back to where it came from.

**YS:** The Davis Yellowstone Park Collection is now part of the Yellowstone story. Your generosity and passion have made it so, and we thank you for it. 🌟





# Waiting on the Beehive

By Mike Green

Six o'clock in the morning, single digit temperatures, the sun still well below the horizon—what were we doing out here? When the alarm roused me from sleep at 5:30 A.M., I was sure I would be alone in my quest to witness one of the great wonders of Yellowstone, but I was mistaken. Two weary eyes peered up at me in the faint light. “Do you want to go, Princess?” I asked. “Yes, Daddy,” she replied. So up we rose, putting on every layer of clothing we had to fight off the biting chill of the early morning air. Little Madeline had always been my number one accomplice in adventure, and this morning was no exception. As we passed Old Faithful and headed into the geyser basin, it was quickly apparent that this was unlike any other time we had been here. Still dark and shrouded by a heavy fog from the myriad thermal features, the boardwalk had an eerie appearance that made me feel like we were in the middle of a scary mystery novel. All around us in the mist were strange sounds and apparitions. Alone, we pressed on, passing the “WARNING—dangerous ice” signs, until at last we reached the perfect spot. Here on the boardwalk was the best view, the closest point, and the place I remembered from so long ago.

It was over 35 years ago that I first stood in this spot and gazed in wonderment at the magnificent cone of the Beehive Geyser. It had been the first great adventure of my life. The summer of 1966—a week in Yellowstone National Park with Mom, Uncle Bill, Aunt Joan, and Grandpa Frank. That was the trip when the bear had almost come through the window; the trip where all the adults turned into kids during the famous shaving cream and deodorant fight in the cabin—a trip filled with wonderful images for a young boy who had never been far from home. The most indelible image of all, though, was standing on the boardwalk, hoping beyond hope that the



*Madeline Green.*

volcanic-looking Beehive Geyser would erupt. I begged Uncle Bill to stay a little longer so we could see it go off. He tried to explain its unpredictable nature and the slim odds that we would get to see it. So after what seemed like an eternity, we finally moved on. I remember looking back several times in hopes it would somehow decide to finally erupt. That memory had never departed, and the desire to see the Beehive go from the boardwalk was alive and well and had become a lifelong dream.

So there we were, Madeline and I, waiting on the Beehive. So much had changed in my life since I had sat there as a little boy. The Beehive Geyser, on the other hand, hadn't changed at all. It looked just as I remembered it. One of the glories of nature is the timeless and unchanging beauty it gives us in a world where nothing stays the same for very long. Mom was gone now, and so was Grandpa Frank. Yet in this timeless place it seemed like only yesterday they had stood right behind me in this very spot. Would this finally be our chance to see the Beehive?

It was obvious from the snow around the cone that it had not erupted during the night. This sometimes dormant, sometimes active wonder is impossible to predict. Now in an active phase, it was erupting every 12 to 22 hours. It had been about 15 hours since the last eruption, so we knew it could be close. Eruptions are

usually preceded by the Beehive indicator, a small vent near the cone that spews water and steam approximately 15 minutes before an eruption.

As we waited in the bitter cold, the cone teasingly boiled and steamed away, but there was no activity from the indicator. The fog in the basin gave the Old Faithful Inn a ghostly appearance in the distance as its namesake geyser went off right on schedule. The sun was getting close to the horizon, but the freezing air was beginning to take its toll. Madeline wanted to see the Beehive as much as I did, but it was becoming obvious that she couldn't take much more. We paced up and down the boardwalk, playing silly games and telling stories, but after two hours we finally headed for the lodge. We were both covered with frost from the steam in the geyser basin, and we had to chuckle at the sight of ourselves with every hair decorated by the white icing.

Disappointed, yet glad to be back in the warmth of the lodge, we joined Mamma, Sean, and Stephanie for a nice breakfast in the dining room. It was the last full day of a wonderful winter adventure in Yellowstone that had begun on New Year's Eve. As Madeline and I told the story of our lonely vigil over breakfast, I think the rest of the crew was quite convinced that we were a few degrees short of a thermal feature. Upon further discussion, however, we all decided to go out after breakfast for one more try. Now, at over 18 hours, it surely must be close, unless of course it had gone while we were eating. I quickly gathered the troops and once again bundled up to go "sit" on the Beehive.

As we all retraced the steps Maddie and I had trodden in darkness earlier that morning, there was a renewed excitement that this, perhaps, was going to be it. As we walked the final section of boardwalk and espied the cone, sure enough, it hadn't gone yet! This was surely going to be the right time to see it go. Nineteen hours plus, it had to erupt soon. We waited and watched while an hour rolled slowly by. We must have walked back and forth to Lion Geyser three times, and still no sign from the indicator.

Stephanie was getting cold, and patience was beginning to run thin. It was going on 20 plus hours since the last

eruption, and still no sign. Could the Beehive be playing with us? It's been known to suddenly go weeks or months without an eruption. Cold and tired, we decided to begin the hike back to the lodge. As we walked away, I looked over my shoulder just in case some activity might be seen before we were out of sight, but alas, nothing. As we passed Lion Geyser it spat and bubbled and said to me, "I'm going off soon," but as it's another rather unpredictable geyser, I reasoned it was best to move on.

We gradually became two groups, with Mamma and Sean out front, Maddie, Stephie, and I lagging way behind. I suppose I didn't really want to go, because it had seemed so close. We reached the junction on the trail. "Let's take the long way back," I said. Mamma and Sean were no longer in sight, and this way gave us one last look at Beehive. Maddie and Stephanie agreed, so we headed the long way around Old Faithful and figured we'd connect up with the rest of the crew back at the lodge. As we rounded the bend, the geyser basin came back into view, and wouldn't you know it—Lion Geyser was going off. "Just our luck," I chuckled to myself. Now on the other side of the Firehole River, we were much farther away but still had a clear view of Beehive's cone. "Come on, Beehive," I said several times, Maddie and Stephie echoing my words with a winter chill in their voices. "Twenty-one hours plus," I thought to myself. How could we have shown so much patience and not been rewarded? The Beehive had foiled us once again. As we headed toward the Old Faithful Inn, the geyser was now at our backs. I kept thinking that maybe before we were out of sight, something might happen. I turned for one last look...nothing. I turned for another last look...nothing. "We're almost out of sight," I thought, one final very last look...THE INDICATOR!!

Oh my gosh, the indicator! I couldn't believe it. "Maddie, Stephanie, if we run we might make it to the boardwalk in time to see it go, will you try?" I asked excitedly. They both nodded yes, and off we went. The boardwalk and my dream spot were now three-quarters of a mile away, and we had about 15 minutes to get there—easy on my own, but with two little girls, this could be a challenge. We began dart-



*Beehive Geyser finally erupts.*



*Beehive Geyser is among the largest cone-type geysers in the world, reaching between 150–200 feet high.*

ing down the boardwalk like we were running for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. We could have gone to the viewing area on that side of the river, but we were now on a mission. Running soon gave way to walking as we gasped in the cold winter air. Stephanie was about to pass out when I offered her a piggyback ride. Fifty yards later, I was about to pass out! Now out of sight of the geyser, we faced the dreadful thought of missing it completely. If anyone had seen us at this point, they would have thought we were overcome by thermal fumes or something. Finally, we reached the boardwalk. Only a few hundred yards to go. Here comes the tricky part. “Careful on the ice, girls, hold my hand now, Stephie...easy now...we made it!”

There we stood, gasping and out of breath, but that was okay. We were 20 feet from one of the greatest geysers in the world moments from an eruption. If only Mama and Sean were here. But wait, who’s that running for the lookout across the river? It’s Mama and Sean! “How did you know?” I yelled loudly. “The ranger at the visitor center told us,” she faintly replied. So now we were all together, although on opposite sides of the river. With a little time to spare, I loaded a fresh roll of film

into my camera as we waited in anticipation. The cone began to churn and boil more violently with every passing moment. I was seven years old all over again as the mighty Beehive suddenly burst forth with a roar, sending a slender stream of water and steam over 150 feet into the air. I reveled with joy at the spectacular show nature was putting on before us. I busily snapped pictures, let out a few good “yahoos,” and thought about my Mom. I somehow knew she was there too. Stephanie and Madeline were in awe of the Beehive as it continued its five-minute display, looking and sounding like a rocket engine. Great clouds of steam rose off the towering plume. It was truly amazing. I turned to give my geyser buddy Madeline a big hug and was shocked to see that she was crying. “What’s wrong, honey?” I asked. “Nothing,” she replied. “Why are you crying?” I asked. “I don’t know,” she said. Then it hit me—all my stories, all those cold hours together, she was crying out of pure joy. I gave her the biggest hug ever and felt my own tears begin to form. Stephanie quickly joined in for the best group hug imaginable. The Beehive was now in its bellowing steam phase as it slowly wound down from its awesome display. I gave a wave across to Mama and Sean, looked across to Old Faithful and the majestic

Inn, and thought nothing could have made this any better.

I cherish those occasional moments that life gives you. Moments when joy or excitement take away all your cares, all your worries. It had been just such a moment. Sure it was just a geyser, but it was a geyser I’d wanted to see for 35 years. Add to that the tears of joy I saw in my little girl’s eyes, and it becomes a moment I’ll treasure for the rest of my life. For a little while, I had felt young again. For a little while, nothing in the whole world mattered except that moment, that place, and being together to see it. As the three of us walked away, hand-in-hand, I felt a wonderful feeling of contentment. Waiting on the Beehive had been worth every second, every minute, and every year. 🌟



*Mike Green, his wife, Bridget, and their three children, Sean (12), Madeline (11), and Stephanie (7), live in Lakewood, Colorado, where Mike is the regional sales manager for an automotive manufacturer. Their family wanted to be someplace special for the coming of the year 2000, and decided to go to Yellowstone, one of their favorite places on Earth. Besides getting to see Beehive go off, they also got to see Old Faithful’s last eruption of 1999 just before midnight, and the first eruption of 2000 at about one in the morning. “We will treasure the memories for the rest of our lives.” Photos courtesy Mike Green.*

## Nez Perce and Geysers...

*"Indians were never in Yellowstone; they were afraid of geysers." (2001 summer visitor to Yellowstone National Park.)*

In August of 2001, Yellowstone National Park consulted with the Nez Perce Tribe of Lapwai, Idaho, about their ancestors' arduous trek through the park in 1877. At that time, as many as 800 individuals and 2,000 horses crossed some of the most difficult terrain the park has to offer, eluding capture by the U.S. Army.

During the Nez Perce visit, a round table discussion was held among knowledgeable park staff (including historian Lee Whittlesey, and park ranger John Lounsbury), author Gerry Green, and elder representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe (former chair person Allen Pinkham, Beatrice Miles, and Clifford Allen). The elders are the repositories of some of the Tribe's oral histories and cultural traditions. During the videotaped session, a lively exchange occurred about American Indians' alleged fear of geysers. Historical motives for the myth were explored, as was the role played by the first superintendent of the park, Philetus Norris, in perpetrating it. Alternative explanations for particularly the Nez Perce relationship with the geyser basins were proposed. Elders explained that their ancestors were taught, instead, to be fearless in order to ensure their survival, to recognize and understand the potential dangers in natural phenomenon such as geysers and grizzlies, and, importantly, to be prepared for those dangers. Common sense, among other attributes, embodied their relationship with the physical world. The videotape of the round table discussion, which included explorations of other aspects of the 1877 Nez Perce trek, can be obtained for viewing by contacting Rosemary Sucec, cultural anthropologist for Yellowstone National Park, at (307) 344-2229 or by email at [rosemary\\_sucec@nps.gov](mailto:rosemary_sucec@nps.gov).

## Science Conference a Success

From October 8 to 10, 2001, the park hosted its Sixth Biennial Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, *Yel-*



*Dr. Nigel H. Trewin, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, guest speaker at the Superintendent's International Luncheon. NPS photo.*

*lowstone Lake: Hotbed of Chaos or Reservoir of Resilience*, in Mammoth Hot Springs. The conference was interdisciplinary in nature and addressed the management issues, natural features, and human history associated with Yellowstone Lake. Session topics included archeology, climate and environmental change, fisheries and ecosystem-level functions, and hydrothermal and geologic processes in the Yellowstone Lake basin.

Nearly 150 people attended the conference, and they included members of the public as well as scientists, authors, media representatives, and individuals from a number of government agencies.

## Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Delegation Visits YNP

Over the four-day period from June 19 to June 22, the park hosted an official delegation of 29 representatives from the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. In what is likely a historic moment for the NPS, the full contingent of the Lower Brule, including the chairperson, tribal council, and the elder resource advisory committee, visited the park to see wolves, tour geyser basins, and meet with park managers. Acting Superintendent Frank Walker, most division chiefs, and other staff met with the group. They discussed the bison management plan, the reintroduction of wolves, sacred sites, fee waivers for religious and other traditional purposes, and employment opportunities. An end-of-the-week dinner honored the guests. Among the attendees

were park staff and external partners, including representatives from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and the Bear Creek Council. The tribe's director of cultural resources and public affairs, Scott Jones, said that they had come with trepidation: "It's a little like getting on a broncing bull to come to a place where people don't quite understand why and how it's sacred to us." In summarizing the visit, Chairperson Michael Jandreau told dinner guests that this was the first time that the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe had "met with such responsive and caring federal employees" in his 30 years of working with federal representatives. Jandreau has been chairman of the tribe for 21 years.

## Queen's Laundry Bath House Listed to National Register of Historic Places

On July 25, 2001, the Queen's Laundry Bath House, built in 1881 and located toward the western end of Sentinel Meadows in Yellowstone's Lower Geyser Basin, was listed to the National Register of Historic Places, the first Yellowstone structure to be listed in 10 years. The building is on the northwestern edge of a mound formed by the active Queen's Laundry Spring. Deposition from the pool's run-off is gradually encircling the bath house.

The bath house was the first building constructed by the federal government for public use in a national park, representing the earliest recognition that providing for visitor accommodations was a legitimate use of federal funds within a national park. This policy would ultimately have a tremendous influence on the national parks, as the infrastructure for public access expanded. The results of that policy are seen today in visitor centers, roads, hotels, stores, campgrounds, and supporting facilities. It is also the only building representing Yellowstone's early civilian administration from 1872 to 1886. The building is associated with Philetus W. Norris, the second superintendent of Yellowstone (1877-1882).

In 1964, the park proposed removing the bath house on the basis that it was impinging on a thermal feature. Park historian Aubrey L. Haines wrote a scathing

Photo by Richard Collier.



Queen's Laundry Bath House, 1999.

letter to the chief park naturalist condemning the proposal, and questioning a park philosophy that would obliterate a building that "has historical value of a high order as a unique remnant of an important period, and as the very beginning of federal construction aimed at serving the park visitor" only for the purpose of restoring a "mediocre" thermal area to its natural state. It is to his credit that the bath house remains today, and now, will remain for the future.

#### Park Employees Receive Environmental Achievement Award

Yellowstone National Park employees were awarded the 2001 Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award at a recent ceremony in Washington, D.C. The award recognizes DOI bureaus, offices, employees, and contractors for exceptional achievements or contributions in a broad range of environmental discipline areas, including recycling, stewardship, education, and outreach.

Yellowstone employees were selected because of their many diverse and outstanding efforts to integrate environmentally sustainable approaches into their mission to protect and preserve park resources. The award also noted the successful development of partnerships between the National Park Service, local and state governments, and a consortium of private interests in implementing a number of successful projects. These include the establishment of a regional recycling program and composting facility, the use of alternative fueled vehicles (including a rigorous pilot test of bio-based fuel for trucks and snowmobiles), the use of renewable solar energy systems, and conversion to the use of environmentally preferred cleaning products.

#### New Publications Available

The following publications are now available from the Yellowstone Center for Resources:

- The USGS publication *The Quaternary and Pliocene Yellowstone Plateau Volcanic Field of Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana*, Professional Paper 729-G, by Robert L. Christiansen.
- A limited supply of copies of the *Western North American Naturalist* volume 61(3), July 2001, containing the proceedings from the Fifth Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, *Exotic Organisms in Greater Yellowstone: Native Biodiversity Under Siege*.
- The *Yellowstone Bird Report, 2000* by Terry McEneaney.

Printed copies of any of these reports may be obtained while they last by calling (307) 344-2203 or by email at beth\_taylor@nps.gov. The bird report and the *Yellowstone Wolf Report, 2000* by Douglas W. Smith, Kerry M. Murphy, and Debra S. Guernsey are also available in pdf format on the park's website at [www.nps.gov/yell/publications](http://www.nps.gov/yell/publications).

#### Potential for Fossil Finds on Mt. Everts

Summer 2001 was the first field season of a two-year project to perform a paleontological inventory and assessment of the stratigraphy and erosion factors on Mt. Everts in the northern portion of Yellowstone. The complex stratigraphy of Mt. Everts is known to contain fossiliferous exposures of Cretaceous sediments, similar to the 70- to 65-million-year-old sediments in northeastern Montana, in which Jack Horner has made major discoveries of dinosaurs such as *Tyrannosaurus rex*. A variety of fossil types including aquatic and terrestrial plants, trace fossils, invertebrates such as fresh water snails, and a medium-sized vertebrate animal, interpreted as an aquatic reptile or possibly a new type of dinosaur, have all been recovered from Mt. Everts. Strong potential exists for more exciting fossil finds.

An interdisciplinary team of experts representing a wide array of geologic and paleontologic expertise, some of whom

have past experience in the Mt. Everts region, are participating in the project, and many were able to visit the site in summer 2001. Current participants include Dr. William Cobban, Paleontologist Emeritus with the U.S. Geological Survey and renowned expert on the Cretaceous index fossils; Dr. Scott Wing, paleobotanist with the Smithsonian; Dr. Karen W. Porter, senior research geologist with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology; Dr. Jason Hicks, Denver University and Denver Museum of Science and Nature, and expert in paleomagnetism; Dr. Thaddeus Dyman, with the U.S. Geological Survey, paleontologist and stratigrapher; Dr. Gail Wiggert, California Department of Energy, trace fossil and sediment analysis; and Vince Santucci, paleontologist with the National Park Service at Fossil Butte National Monument. Other experts have indicated a desire to join in the fieldwork next year.

A literature search was conducted to identify all of the known research previously conducted in the Mt. Everts area. Previous fossil localities were identified, stratigraphic interpretations synopsized, and attempts made to locate fossils previously collected from Mt. Everts and held in repositories outside the park.

A pedestrian inventory of the exposed formations just north of the northern park boundary were examined. The significant fossil localities were recorded, photographed, and documented. Volcanic ash was collected in various locations for analysis to identify the age of the deposit. Sediments from fossil leaf localities were collected to conduct pollen analysis useful in paleoclimatic reconstructions.

Field surveys will provide baseline geographic data on fossil localities, stratigraphic data related to the geology of the localities, paleontological data related to the identification of paleotaxa present, and geologic data related to the depositional environment of the fossiliferous units. Investigating fossiliferous units such as Mt. Everts provides useful information relating to the paleoenvironments 70 million years ago. This may help scientists better understand the cycles and evolution of the modern environment of the Yellowstone region. 🌲