



NPS Women Cartes de Visite Collection



Isabel Bassett Wasson, c. 1920s. (Courtesy of John Wasson).

Isabel Bassett Wasson
Yellowstone National Park
Park Ranger, 1920

- Born on January 11, 1897 in Brooklyn, New York.
- Graduated from Wellesley College in 1918 with a degree in history. Took classes in geology at the University of Chicago and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Traveled with her parents and the Brooklyn Daily Eagle party to Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks in the summer of 1919.
- The tour leader noticed her enthusiasm and asked her to lecture the group on the origins of Yellowstone's geological features.
- Yellowstone superintendent Horace Albright overheard her lectures and offered her a job.
- Married Theron Wasson in June 1920.
- Was Yellowstone's first woman park ranger, working from July 1-September 15, 1920.
- Her duties included manning the information desk in the morning and giving lectures in three different locations in the afternoon.
- Because her duties were those of a naturalist, she is often referred to as the NPS's first woman ranger-naturalist (although her title was park ranger).
- Albright offered her a "more important" position if she agreed to return the next summer but she was pregnant and declined.
- Moved to Oklahoma with her husband and son, where they both worked for the Pure Oil Company.
- Became one of the world's first petroleum engineers.
- Moved to Forest River, Illinois in 1926 and she began teaching science classes to high school and adult learners for 10 years in the 1930s.
- No information has been found about her life from the 1940s until her death.
- Died on February 21, 1994 in La Grange Park, Illinois.

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