

When Harry Got Taken:

The early days of the Yellowstone camps

by Mark Barringer

National parks are a part of American culture. The more famous names among them — Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier — evoke childhood memories of family vacations, both in the minds of those who experienced the trips and those who, being family members or extremely tolerant neighbors, watched the home movies in basement family rooms. If taken in Yellowstone, all such movies featured the requisite shots of wildlife, geysers, and park rangers in their Smokey the Bear hats, and usually included famous landmarks like the Old Faithful Inn or the Canyon Hotel. These pictures, with samples of the natural, cultural, and human dimensions of the park, seemed to capture the essence of Yellowstone.

But an important piece of the park fabric was missing from these home movies. Rarely did a tourist snap a photo or shoot a frame of a waitress, a bus driver, or a maid; visitors purchased ice cream, souvenirs, and gasoline in the park, never realizing that those who served them were also part of Yellowstone. In fact, concessionaires and their employees have been one of the most influential groups in park history, easily as important as the National Park Service (NPS) itself, both in the past and the present. Any historical analysis of national parks policy, any investi-

gation of NPS administrative practices, any discussion of future management plans, remains incomplete without accounting for the concessionaires, who remain the NPS's "silent partners" in park operations. Nowhere is this more true than in Yellowstone, where the Child and Nichols families created a concessions empire that lasted for 75 years. Their story, a small portion of which follows, is the untold history of Yellowstone.

On March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed a bill creating Yellowstone National Park. Almost before the ink was dry, entrepreneurs began positioning themselves to take advantage of the potential tourist business, thus launching a one-hundred-year period of concessions competition. First in line were local frontiersmen, individualists who perceived the reservation as a source of supplemental income. J. C. McCartney, Henry Horr, Matthew McGuirk, Frank J. Haynes, William Wylie — all of whom established themselves early as pioneers of visitor accommodations — catered to the small groups of self-guided adventurers coming to the area. This early rush of businessmen, anxious to capitalize on park tourism, prompted the United States Department of the Interior to

institute a system of formal leases for operating in Yellowstone. By 1882 the Northern Pacific Railroad, through various shadow corporations and front men — among them Harry W. Child, a native Californian with extensive Montana land holdings and business connections — controlled most concession leases and dominated visitor services such as hotels and transportation. This company maintained its position for the next fifty years, first actively and later as a silent partner.

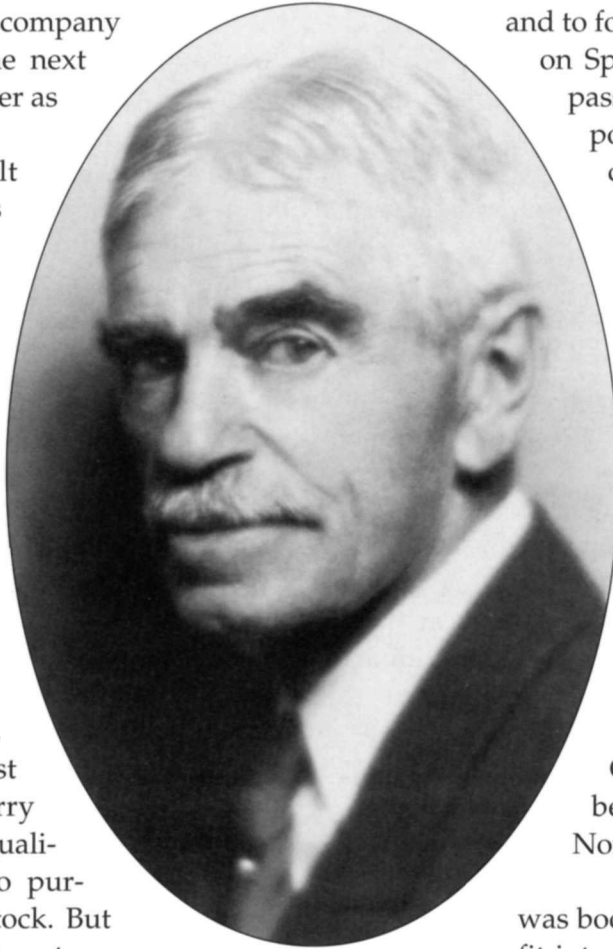
After Theodore Roosevelt broke the Northern Securities Company trust in 1904, the Northern Pacific quietly began phasing out its Yellowstone operations. In 1905 the railroad sold one-half of its stock in park concessions for \$82,150. Two years later the company divested itself of the remainder of its holdings, selling out for an additional \$268,195. This withdrawal left a vacuum, a void to be filled by those most adept, most visionary, sometimes most opportunistic. Usually, Harry Child possessed all of these qualities — in fact it was he who purchased the Northern Pacific stock. But once, only once, early in Yellowstone history, Harry got taken.¹

Harry W. Child was a man of many talents, foremost among them making money. Born in 1857 in California, he was educated in the East and moved to Montana as a young man, becoming involved in the lucrative mining industry there. By the age of thirty he was general manager of the Gregory Mine south-

west of Helena and owned a large home on that city's fashionable Madison Avenue, two doors from the residence of Territorial Governor Samuel Hauser. At the turn of the century he was operating out of Salesville (now Gallatin Gateway), Montana, as proprietor of the local bank. He later partnered with area ranch-

er Charles Anceney to form a land company and to found the famous Flying D Ranch on Spanish Creek, a concern encompassing over 500,000 acres and supporting at times 200,000 head of cattle. From 1891 until 1907 he operated several Yellowstone concessions, including the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company (YPHC) and the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company (YPTC), using Northern Pacific money instead of his own. All of his ventures proved profitable; Child was a millionaire before reaching age fifty. As a proven if not thoroughly trusted administrator and widely known as "Harry hard-up" for his frugality, Child earned the respect and benefited from the capital of Northern Pacific officials.²

Early in the 1900s, business was booming. Travelers, most of whom fit into one of four categories with distinct social hierarchies, flocked to Yellowstone in increasing numbers every year, and most left at least part of their vacation budget in Harry Child's pocket. Lowest on the list were the "sagebrushers," individuals who came in wagons or on horses, camping wherever they wished — Child



Harry W. Child
(Montana Historical
Society, Helena)

1. "An Act to Set Apart a Certain Tract of Land Lying Near the Headwaters of the Yellowstone River as a Public Park," in Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), pp. 28–29; Richard A. Bartlett, *Yellowstone: A Wilderness Besieged* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 116, 176; John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), pp. 32–37.

2. Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, pp. 173–175; "Miscellaneous Files of Harry W. Child," microfilm, reel #1, Yellowstone Park Company Records, Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University–Bozeman Libraries, Bozeman, Montana (hereafter cited as MSU–Bozeman); Carl J. White, "Financial Frustration in Territorial Montana," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 17 (Spring, 1967): 44; Michael P. Malone, "The Gallatin Canyon and the Tides of History," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 23 (July, 1973): 7; *The Anceney of the Flying D Ranch* (Bozeman, MT: Gallatin County Historical Society, 1986).

saw little of their money. Next were those who toured the park via the system of tent camps that had sprung up near major attractions like Old Faithful and the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. These people spent a comparatively small amount of money for basic services—transport on small independently operated stagecoaches, lodging in canvas tents, and plain fare at meals. Because of the low prices charged for such tours, they soon became a most popular method of seeing the park, and appealed especially to school teachers and other less affluent folk. As the number of these visitors increased, so did Child's interest in them. The third and most numerous group were the "couponers," those who bought packaged tours through railroad traffic agents and spent a tightly scheduled three-and-one-half days traveling from place to place. Such tours included meals, lodging, and transportation through the park—all in Child's gourmet restaurants, luxurious hotels, and roomy stagecoaches. The fourth and final group consisted of the well-to-do vacationers who traditionally spent upwards of two weeks in the park, idly moving from the spacious lobby of the Old Faithful Inn to the hotels at Canyon, Mammoth, or Lake at their leisure. Again, like the couponers, these individuals spent their money with Child.³

With the YPHC, the YPTC, and, after 1911, the Yellowstone Park Boat Company offering excursions on Yellowstone Lake, Child served the most—and the most affluent—travelers and dominated Yellowstone concessions. But one operator, William Wylie, who owned a system of tent

camps, resisted all such influence. He managed his business under a series of one-year contracts with the Interior Department from 1892 until 1896, when he acquired a long-term lease, his tents were replaced with solid, wood-and-canvas structures, and his locations became permanent settlements. Wylie constantly irritated the wealthy and snobbish Child because the tourists who used his camps were a different sort, not at all like those who stayed at the posh hotels; his guests paid low prices for Spartan accommodations and dust-plagued stagecoach tours. Wylie strenuously resisted all attempts to be driven out of business, even when the railroad and the YPHC together undercut prices to force his withdrawal. In 1905, he won this fight over unfair practices in a hearing before the Interstate Commerce Commission and seemingly was in Yellowstone to stay.⁴

Despite this setback, Child remained quietly determined to acquire the Wylie camps, a goal he would accomplish in 1905. After making repeated but unsuccessful appeals to his Washington political contacts, and wary of the Northern Pacific, to whom he already owed hundreds of thousands of dollars, he approached familiar, local allies to dispose of his competition. One such man was A. W. Miles, who owned a large, profitable dry goods establishment and a grocery store in nearby Livingston, Montana. He was also Wylie's main supplier, having extended generous credit to the camping company for many years, and thus could exert added pressure. Another was A. L. Smith of Helena, an officer of the State Bank of Montana, who was always willing to finance a promising venture. In 1905, shortly after the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled for Wylie, these three purchased the camping company. Child, not wanting railroad officials to know that he was using profits from the hotel and transportation companies for this purpose, remained a silent partner. To further the subterfuge he had Smith purchase the stock for

3. "Travel Memorandum, Yellowstone National Park, for June, July and August, 1916 and 1917," box YPC 3, file "Historical 2," Yellowstone National Park Research Library, Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming (hereafter cited as YNP); Department of the Interior, Yellowstone National Park, Office of the Superintendent, "Memo of Park Travel Season of 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916," box 3, file "Yellowstone National Park—Miscellaneous," Howard H. Hays Collection, American Heritage Center, Laramie, Wyoming (hereafter cited as AHC); "Earnings of Wylie Permanent Camping Company 1906–1916," *ibid.* For an exhaustive collection of park travel accounts and anecdotes, see Aubrey L. Haines, *The Yellowstone Story* (Yellowstone National Park: Yellowstone Library and Museum Association and Colorado Associated University Press, 1977), II: 100–160.

4. E. H. Moorman, "Journal of Years of Work Spent in Yellowstone National Park 1899–1948," MS, 8, YNP; [Jack Ellis Haynes], "Wiley," box C-17, file "W. W. Wylie and O. Anderson," 2, *ibid.* Child took over the Yellowstone Park Boat Company in 1911 in a partnership with his son-in-law William "Billie" Nichols and Howard Elliot, then president of the Northern Pacific. Nichols contributed none of the \$75,000 purchase price; Child, typically, brought him in on the deal because he was family. See Warren Delano to Harry W. Child, May 16, 1911, Box YPC 24, file "YP Boat Co., 1914–1930," *ibid.*; Child to Howard Eliot, May 26, 1911, *ibid.*; Delano to Child, May 31, 1911, *ibid.*



The Wylie camp at Swan Lake. (National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park)

him, paying cash for a two-thirds share. Miles bought the other one-third by calling in Wylie's outstanding bill for supplies. The new partners incorporated in West Virginia, well out of Northern Pacific territory, as the Wylie Permanent Camping Company, taking advantage of the well-known "Wylie Way" advertising slogan by retaining the former owner's name.⁵

Over the next several years the company became immensely successful, largely due to the injection of new capital, the fortuitousness of good timing, and the business acumen (and railroad connections) of Child and Miles. In 1906, the first summer after the new owners assumed control,

visitation to Yellowstone increased nearly 100 percent, from 13,727 in 1904 to 26,188. Now that the camps were in friendly hands, railroad ticket agents, loyal to Child because of his Northern Pacific connections, promoted them as well as the more expensive hotel tours. The Portland Industrial Exposition and Trade Fair attracted people from Chicago and points east over the Northern Pacific rails to visit the Exposition in Oregon, many of whom took advantage of special package tours and stopped at Yellowstone for a three or four-day excursion. That summer, 3,668 guests stayed in the camps. At the same time the company added to its four existing locations by constructing Camp Roosevelt near Tower Falls and establishing a site on Swan Lake Flat, about five miles south of Mammoth Hot Springs. Two years later, the Union Pacific Railroad completed a branch line to West Yellowstone; Child and Miles took advantage of the new revenue source by building a camp at Riverside, five miles inside the West entrance. In 1909 another exposition, this one in

5. Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 39–40; Moorman, "Journal of Years in Yellowstone," p. 8, YNP; [Jack Ellis Haynes], "Wiley," 2, *ibid*; F. J. Haynes to James R. Hickey, September 2, 1917, box 16, folder 13, collection 1500, F. J. Haynes Papers, MSU–Bozeman; Dan Miles to Jack Ellis Haynes, May 9, 1951, box 39, folder 25, collection 1504, Jack Ellis Haynes Papers, *ibid*.; *Livingston [Montana] Enterprise*, September 4, 5, 1919.

Seattle, again drew large crowds to the park; a record 5,024 people visited the "Wylie" camps.⁶

By 1909 the company had expanded greatly, having accumulated 27 large passenger coaches, 63 mountain spring wagons, 4 surreys, and 378 horses, while repaying its owners handsomely. But Child, who seemingly wanted nothing more than complete control of park business, uncharacteristically decided to reduce his holdings. That same year he agreed to sell half his interest, or one-third of the company, to Frank J. Haynes, a longtime Yellowstone operator. On May 14 the two signed a contract to exchange 333 1/3 shares of Wylie Permanent Camping Company stock for \$60,000. Interior Secretary Richard Ballinger approved the deal and on September 22 the two principals signed papers transferring the stock but giving Child the right of first refusal if Haynes decided to sell.⁷

Haynes was an unlikely partner in the camping company venture but he profited immensely from Child's puzzling decision. He was the official park photographer and, since the departure of Wylie, had been Child's chief antagonist. He operated in direct competition with the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company, conveying tourists into the reservation from the west on his Yellowstone and Western Stage Lines. The two men were not fond of each other — Haynes enjoyed the friendship of park administrators, while Child remained aloof unless there was profit involved — but they nonetheless became uneasy partners in the camping company. Haynes bought the stock on credit extended by Child's pet banker, A. L. Smith of Helena; the purchase was a smart move as he, Child, and Miles shared \$75,000 in dividends in 1909. He also used his Wylie stock for years as collateral for other projects.⁸

6. Moorman, "Journal of Years in Yellowstone," 8, YNP; [J. E. Haynes], "Wiley," 2, *ibid.*; "Statement of Net Earnings, Wylie Camping Company, Dividends," box 16, folder 12, collection 1500, MSU-Bozeman; Department of the Interior, "Memo of Park Travel Season of 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916," AHC; "Earnings of Wylie Permanent Camping Company 1906-1916," *ibid.*; Maury Klein, *Union Pacific: The Rebirth 1894-1969* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 327.

7. [Jack Ellis Haynes], "Wiley," 2, YNP; Richard A. Ballinger to Child, July 10, 1909, box 16, folder 11, collection 1500, MSU-Bozeman; contract between F. J. Haynes and Harry Child, September 22, 1909, *ibid.*

8. A. L. Smith to F. J. Haynes, December 12, 1912, box 16, folder 14, collection 1500, MSU-Bozeman. Child and Haynes enjoyed a spirited competition in park business for decades, a

The stock sale to Haynes marked one of the few times between 1909 and 1930 that Child did not have effective control of an important Yellowstone franchise. He typically prevailed in the financial skirmishes constantly being waged among Yellowstone concessioners, and through his active accumulation of businesses the consolidation of park operations, although complicated, began to take shape. Only the camping concession eluded his grasp. In 1905, Yellowstone had three transportation companies, three store operators, and two camping companies, among other small concerns; visitors often spent as much time fending off agents, promoters, and salesmen as they did seeing the park. By 1914, a total of twelve separate franchisees operated in Yellowstone. Child controlled the largest of these, including the YPHC, YPTC, and the Yellowstone Park Boat Company. He had a financial interest in others, such as his one-third of the Wylie Permanent Camping Company, and rarely missed an opportunity to increase his holdings. In 1915, he provided the cash for his secretary, Charles Ashworth Hamilton, to purchase the Henry E. Klammer general store near Old Faithful. Hamilton, who remained close to Child both personally and financially for years, later bought a store at Mammoth from Anna K. Pryor and her sister, Elizabeth Trischman, and one at Canyon from George Whittaker. So Child was involved, either directly or indirectly, in almost all aspects of visitor services. But his reduced holdings in the Wylie Permanent Camping Company and the emergence of an upstart competitor, the Shaw and Powell Camping Company, kept the camping concession out of his control.⁹

Three factors, one within the park and two with-

tradition passed down to their successors. Descriptions of the relationship can be found in Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, and in Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, II.

9. Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, 194; Wayne Replogle, "History of Yellowstone National Park Concessions," MS, YNP; Acting Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, to Secretary of the Interior, June 16, 1915, box C-16, file "H. E. Klammer and C. A. Hamilton," *ibid.*; contract between Mary Klammer and C. A. Hamilton, November 23, 1914, *ibid.*; George Pryor, assignment of lease to Elizabeth Trischman, October 19, 1912, box C-16, file "Pryor and Pryor, Holm Transportation Company," *ibid.*; Walter J. Henderson and Alexander Lyall, assignment of lease to George Whittaker, February 8, 1913, box C-17, file "J. H. Ash, G. Whittaker," *ibid.* Several other minor concessioners operated during this time. For a comprehensive listing, see Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, II, 364-366.

out, caused a massive restructuring of Yellowstone concessions operations between 1915 and 1917 and moved the camping business farther from his grasp. The first was the arrival of the automobile. Child, who had large sums tied up in livestock and stage-coaches, had lobbied the Interior Department successfully for several years to keep cars out of Yellowstone. The Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, who had equally large sums tied up in Child and whose spur lines ended at the park, joined him in this cause. But in 1915, despite their best efforts, the first autos passed through the north entrance at Gardiner, Montana, and Child made plans to motorize the YPTC. Unable to change from stagecoaches to busses quickly, and while vehemently protesting to Washington officials about the incompatibility of cars and the traditional horse-drawn wagons on the narrow park roads, he and the other concessioners formed the Cody-Sylvan Pass Motor Company, a rare cooperative effort by several major park franchisees.¹⁰

This company existed only briefly during the summer of 1916. Shortly after the season ended, as Child, Haynes, and the others counted profits amid the snow squalls of autumn, the second factor forcing reorganization appeared, one that would remain a constant consideration in all concession matters. The United States National Park Service (NPS), a newly formed branch of the Interior Department, became custodians of the park, taking over from the U.S. Army contingent that had served there since 1887. The agency's dynamic chief, Stephen T. Mather, and his assistant Horace M. Albright were, like Harry Child, native Californians and adept businessmen, and had complete control over all National Park operations. Foremost on their agenda was a consolidation of Yellowstone concessions, which had become ungovernable as operators multiplied. They believed that the competition among franchisees was detrimental to the traveling public and that monopolies for each major facet of the operation — hotels,

transportation, and camping — would simplify administration and increase visitation. Mather and Albright focused their attention on Child, who, despite his continued protests about automobiles, nonetheless remained the most capable and financially solvent of the concessioners. And the two NPS officials were completely committed to motorize the transportation concession.¹¹

Mather and Albright tried and failed to convince the park operators to agree upon a permanent plan for motorization, finally imposing one of their own design. In November, 1916, Albright met in Chicago with the main Yellowstone concessioners and their attorneys — a lot of money was at stake — to find a solution. During the four-and-one-half-hour session they debated four proposals, ranging from individual motorization by each business, a solution unacceptable to the NPS, to organizing a single company, like the temporary Cody-Sylvan Pass Lines, with ownership proportionate to investment in the park. None of the proposals were approved. The meeting ended after all parties agreed, in principle, to a single transportation operation, with NPS Director Mather deciding which of the park operators would acquire this valuable franchise. Thus, in December, Mather called the concessioners to Washington and presented them with a sweeping and uncompromising plan for reorganization.¹²

Through his program for consolidation, Mather simplified ownership and operations of all concessions, but left the camping business in a weakened condition. He allowed the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company to keep its lodgings, and awarded the hotly contested transportation monopoly to the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company. Child thus had a solid hold on the two most profitable businesses in the park. Using threats of franchise cancellation as leverage, Mather instructed Haynes to surrender his stock in the Wylie company and sell his

10. Richard A. Bartlett, "Those Infernal Machines in Yellowstone," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 20 (July, 1970), 16–26; Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, 82–87; "Minutes of Concessioner Meeting," November 18, 1916, box 22, folder 20, collection 1500, MSU–Bozeman. The Cody–Sylvan Pass Motor Company was owned by Child, Haynes, and the operators of the Shaw and Powell Camps Company; Child held approximately 35 percent, Haynes 40 percent.

11. Replogle, "History of Yellowstone Concessions," YNP; Moorman, "Journal of Years in Yellowstone," 14–15, *ibid*; Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (3d ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 120–128.

12. "Minutes of Concessioner Meeting," November 18, 1916, box 22, folder 20, collection 1500, MSU–Bozeman; F. J. Haynes to Hickey, July 18, 1917, box 16, folder 13, *ibid*.

Yellowstone and Western Stage Lines to Child, and retire from all but his photographic business. Furthermore, Mather demanded that Child, like Haynes, forfeit his interest in the camping business and transfer his and Haynes' stock, along with \$5,000 in Transportation Company stock, to an escrow account. The stock was to be used by Child's former partner A. W. Miles, J.D. Powell of the Shaw and Powell Company, and an assortment of minority investor, to finance a new camping monopoly. In return, this group conceded all rights to transportation. Mather neglected to provide adequate guarantees of capitalization for this new company, however, and his oversight would soon cause more problems.¹³

The final factor affecting reorganization, simply because it made some operations financially untenable, was the United States entry into World War I in 1917. Railroads, primary carriers of tourists for the park businesses, were subjected to government control through the U.S. Railroad Administration and were no longer free to schedule excursions to Yellowstone. The consequent reduction in travel caused the hotel company to close down most of its facilities during 1917 and 1918. The camps of the newly formed Yellowstone Park Camping Company remained open (under NPS orders) but lost money. All park operators suffered; even Child, who had borrowed heavily from the railroads to purchase over 100 White Motor Company busses in 1917, missed note payments during this time. His companies, however, stayed solvent. But the camping business did not have this cushion and, when tourists returned after the cessation of hostilities, its previously tenuous financial problems soon became irreversible.¹⁴

The Yellowstone Park Camping Company, formed early in 1917 under orders from NPS director

Mather, had been plagued with difficulties from its inception and was now, after the summer of 1918, on the verge of collapse. The war limited visitation. The ownership was fragmented. Majority stockholders Miles and Powell, both experienced in camp operations, were losing interest as profits lagged. The NPS established free campgrounds for auto visitors, cutting into the company share of business. And Child never delivered the agreed-upon \$5,000 in YPTC stock to the new owners. Worse yet, he had also failed to deliver half the Wylie shares bought back from Haynes at Mather's direction; instead of placing them in escrow as ordered, Child had directed banker (and escrow officer) A. L. Smith to give these shares to his son-in-law Billie Nichols and to Miles. Only the efforts of one man — general manager Ed Moorman — kept the company operating through the 1918 season. He had been an employee of William Wylie and had remained the hands-on manager of the camps throughout its many permutations, lending a much-needed sense of continuity. Despite his struggles to keep the business viable, changes were inevitable after the disastrous war years.¹⁵

Another longtime company employee, Howard Hays, was himself becoming restless and desirous of change. He had started selling camp tours as a travel agent in Salt Lake City in 1905 and had risen through the ranks to become general agent and traffic manager by 1916. After eleven years of promoting the "Wylie Way" in newspapers, at trade shows, and even at World's Fairs,

13. "Minutes of Stockholders' Meeting, Yellowstone Park Camping Company," May 11, 1918, box YPC 14, file "YP Lodges and Camps," YNP; "Minutes of Concessioner Meeting," November 18, 1916, box 22, folder 20, collection 1500, MSU-Bozeman; F. J. Haynes to Hickey, July 18, 1917, box 16, folder 13, *ibid.*

14. John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), 137-138; [Jack Ellis Haynes], "Yellowstone Park Camping Co.," MS, box C4, file "Yellowstone Park Company," YNP; Gerard J. Pesman and Helen I. Pesman, "Yellowstone's Transition from Stagecoaches to Yellow Buses," MS, 14, *ibid.*; United States Department of the Interior, Yellowstone National Park, Office of the Superintendent, "Annual Report of the Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, for the year 1917," *ibid.*

15. The stockholders of the new company included A. W. Miles, John D. Powell, Dan Miles, Eunice C. Shaw, Jessie E. Shaw, L. C. Shaw, W. C. Shaw, Alice Hight, and Viola Powell. See the two escrow receipts dated May 5, 1919, box 3, file "Yellowstone National Park Miscellaneous," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; also, escrow receipt, May 6, 1919, *ibid.*; Horace M. Albright, "Yellowstone's Camps," *New York Times*, February 20, 1921, sec. VII, p. 7; Moorman, "Journal of Years in Yellowstone," YNP. The stock transaction that was to have occurred became the basis for a later lawsuit between Haynes and Child. The stock had split in 1912, which meant that Haynes, although still owning 1/3 of the company, now held 666 2/3 shares of stock. Mather's deal specified that Child was to purchase Haynes' interest, but he only had to deliver into escrow 333 1/3 shares. Hence, Child divided the remaining 333 1/3 between Miles and Nichols. Later, when Mather discovered this loophole in the agreement, Child surrendered the stock. See F. J. Haynes to Hickey, July 18, 1917, box 16, folder 13, collection 1500, MSU-Bozeman; Hickey to Haynes, August 20, 1917, *ibid.*; Hickey to Haynes, September 15, 1917, *ibid.*

Hays joined the Chicago and Northwestern Railway and Union Pacific Railway, managing their combined Department of Tours for a brief period. Then, during the war, he worked for the U.S. Railway Administration's Bureau of Service, again in Chicago. Now, after his service ended, he wanted to become involved in Yellowstone again.¹⁶

Hays could not have had better timing. Harry Child was in ill health, a combination of diabetes and other chronic disorders making his continued survival suspect. His son Huntley had recently run afoul of NPS Director Mather and had been banished from all park businesses. The war had been profitable to many in the United States, and investment capital was abundant. Moreover, Mather and Albright were not happy with the consolidation that they had effected and were interested in facilitating a change; they were concerned with the financial condition of the camping company and with the future of the other concessions if Child should die.¹⁷

Hays originally planned to return to Yellowstone concessions, but his goal soon became larger and involved many men experienced in western tourism. In December, 1918, he learned that his close friend Roe Emery was on the verge of acquiring a transportation monopoly in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, and the two concocted a scheme to form one corporation, with sufficient capital and expertise, and monopolize tourist services in Yellowstone, Glacier, and Rocky Mountain national parks. But, while their experience was sufficient, neither possessed such capital. So Hays, through Emery, met with Walter White of the White Motor Company in Cleveland, an industrialist who had made millions building vehicles for the Armed Forces. White was already involved in the parks through his deals with various transportation concessions and would be the financial partner in the fast-forming organization. Hays next broached the subject with Gerrit Fort, who was an official with the U.S. Railroad Administration



Howard Hays in 1921. (Haynes Foundation Collection, Montana Historical Society)

and, like himself, ready for new adventures; Fort expressed a cautious interest in the idea. The men then contacted NPS Assistant Director Albright, who by 1919 would become Superintendent of Yellowstone; he assured Hays that the Park Service would be receptive to any such proposal. The group, with the full knowledge and support of the NPS, was plotting no less than a complete takeover of concessions in three of the largest national parks.¹⁸

Encouraged by the interest, Hays proceeded to work on the ambitious scheme while keeping other options open. On January 5, 1919, he traveled to San Diego, where Child lived during the winter months, to inquire if the assets of the YPHC and the YPTC might be for sale. He wrote to Emery and stated that, if the news was positive, he would

16. Howard H. Hays, "Occupation: Howard H. Hays' Chronology to the Present," box 3, file "Yellowstone National Park-Miscellaneous," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; *Salt Lake Evening Telegram*, October 30, 1914.

17. Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, 174; Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, p. 125; Howard H. Hays to Walter White, March 27, 1919, box 3, file "1916-1919 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Gerrit Fort, December 28, 1918, *ibid.*

18. James H. Pickering, foreword to *The Rocky Mountain Wonderland* by Enos A. Mills (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), xxx; Hays to Fort, December 28, 1918, box 3, file "1916-1919 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Fort to Hays, January 2, 1919, *ibid.*; Horace M. Albright to Hays, January 2, 1919, *ibid.*; Emery to Hays, [December, 1918], *ibid.* White was well-equipped to finance such a transaction; his war-tax bill for 1918 totaled over \$4 million. He likely bankrolled Emery in his Rocky Mountain Transportation enterprise.

communicate by telegram using a prearranged code. He also met with A. W. Miles of the camping company and established a backup position for himself, learning that, if he partnered with longtime company-man Moorman in a purchase, that business could be had for \$150,000 with generous terms.¹⁹

The backup plan was a wise maneuver because the more ambitious strategy of a complete takeover came together quickly but, lacking money, just as quickly lost momentum. Early in January Hays received a positive response from Child, who insisted that for ten years he had wanted out, but no one had ever made him an acceptable offer. Even now, neither man truly believed that a deal could be struck; Child did not think that Hays could muster the financial means to buy his Yellowstone businesses (Walter White, because he supplied the busses for the YPTC, had insisted that Hays keep his involvement secret), and Hays was skeptical of ever agreeing on a price. By the end of the month Hays learned that White had been unable to interest any bankers in backing the potential deal. He then turned to James Hannaford of the Northern Pacific, which currently held an \$800,000 mortgage on the park hotels, to inquire about bypassing Child altogether, but Hannaford refused to betray his long-time client. So Hays, while still hoping somehow to finance the entire purchase, turned his attention to his fallback position with the camps.²⁰

The Yellowstone Park Camping Company thus became the focus of much attention, even competition, in the spring of 1919, and as a consequence Harry Child discovered that his position as the pre-eminent Yellowstone deal maker was in jeopardy. Unstable financially, the company attracted potential buyers. Child wanted the business in the worst way; he still seethed about the imposed restructuring that had forced him to relinquish control, though most would argue that he received the best of the deal. No

one believed that he, even now with failing health, would ever quit Yellowstone, despite his remonstrations to the contrary. But he wanted the camping company at a bargain and, knowing that Hays was interested but believing him unable to acquire financing, mistakenly waited for the owners to lower their asking price before striking. He even sent an encouraging, if patronizing, note to Hays, advising him not to "be discouraged, little boy, but stand up to the dough dish." Hays, however, had managed to interest Emery and White in this smaller acquisition, by promoting it as a possible springboard to complete concessions control. He had also persuaded Mather and Albright to restructure the franchise contract so that the government would take a smaller percentage of the profits. This deal White could finance on his own; by April 10, 1919, Hays was riding a Northern Pacific train East from Forsyth, Montana, with an option to purchase the Yellowstone Park Camping Company. The buyout proceeded smoothly. Hays, Emery, and silent-partner White gave the stockholders of the company approximately \$70,000 in cash and notes payable for another \$70,000. They cut Moorman in on the deal (at Miles' insistence), changed the name slightly (from Yellowstone Park Camping Company to Yellowstone Park Camps Company), and by June had complete operational control. Child fumed; they had stolen it from under his nose, and the camping business he wanted so badly had again eluded him.²¹

With the assistance of Moorman, Hays quickly began rebuilding the rundown company, adding more substantial facilities to compete with the NPS free campgrounds. In 1919 they constructed a new lodge at Camp Roosevelt, providing offices and a dining room, and later added an "assembly house." Frame cabins were erected at several locations to replace some longstanding canvas-walled structures. In 1920 they erected Lake Lodge and "delicatessens" at Old Faithful and Fishing Bridge, two of the most

19. Hays to Emery, January 4, 1919, box 3, file "1916-1919 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Fort, January 4, 1919, *ibid.*; Hays to Mather and Albright, January 4, 1919, *ibid.*

20. Hays to Mather and Albright, December 28, 1918, box 3, file "1916-1919 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Albright, January 20, 1919, *ibid.*; Hays to Fort, January 22, 1919, *ibid.*; Child to Hays, January 27, 1919, *ibid.*; White to Hays, January 28, 1919, *ibid.*; A. W. Miles to Hays, January 31, 1919, *ibid.*

21. Hays to White, January 29, 1919, box 3, file "1916-1919 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Emery, January 30, 1919, *ibid.*; Hays to Fort, February 3, 1919, *ibid.*; Child to Hays, February 14, 1919, *ibid.*; Hays to White, March 27, 1919, *ibid.*; Hays to Fort, April 10, 1919, *ibid.*; escrow receipt, May 6, 1919, *ibid.*; escrow receipt, May 5, 1919, *ibid.*



A tent cabin campground at Canyon. (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

heavily-visited sites. Old Faithful also received a "large dance hall" for tourist amusement. At Mammoth, Hays and Moorman expanded the existing camp and added both a swimming pool and a laundry for tourist use. By 1923 the Mammoth Lodge was open for business, and the following year the lodge at Sylvan Pass became operational. The two men also promoted the business admirably, increasing both visitation and profits annually.²²

Other interested parties — including Emery, White, Albright, and Child — observed this progress with varying levels of interest and concern. Emery was least involved, as his interest in the camps was purely financial and the transportation franchise in Rocky Mountain National Park occupying most of his attention. White concealed his stake in the company by having his stock issued in Hays' name and keeping it, along with a deed of trust for his wife, in a Cleveland safe deposit box. In this way, whenever

Child came East to purchase more busses for his transportation business, White could deny holding stock in the camping company — Child would not likely do business with a competitor. Albright actively supported Hays, still believing that the goal of a consolidated concessions operation, encompassing several parks, was feasible. But the other principals had abandoned the idea of ever taking the hotels and transportation away from Child. Instead, buoyed by the success of Hays, Emery and White began investigating opportunities at other parks and contented themselves with the growing amount of money taken in by the camps.²³

In the spring of 1924 the Yellowstone Park Camps Company was a solid, profitable, well-run operation. But due to a fortunate set of circumstances, Harry Child finally got another chance to own the monopoly that had eluded his control for so many years. His interest in park business was renewed; after battling chronic illness since 1918, he was reinvigorated by

22. Moorman, "Journal of Years in Yellowstone," 17–19, YNP; "Comparative Travel Statistics for Yellowstone Park During 1919 and 1920 to September 18th," box YPC 12, file "travel 1918–1920," *ibid.*; Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, II, 361.

23. White to Hays, October 2, 1922, box 3, file "1920–1924 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; White to Hays, October 7, 1922, *ibid.*; Hays to Emery, April 2, 1923, *ibid.*; White to Hays, March 17, 1924, *ibid.*

the discovery of insulin in 1921. And now Hays was himself ill, hospitalized with pleurisy in Livingston. In addition, Emery and White had discovered other opportunities in Glacier and Sequoia National Parks in which they wanted to invest, and wished Hays to participate. Using Hays' illness as a pretext (so as not to give the impression of profit-taking to Mather and Albright, with whom they would still have to deal), the three partners, through Hays, made Child aware that they were interested in selling the camping company.²⁴

Having missed one opportunity, Child did not hesitate to seize this one, but painstakingly concealed his ownership. Throughout the negotiating process, he insisted that in all correspondence the company be referred to as "the sheep ranch." Then, instead of buying the camps outright he sent a front man to consummate the purchase. In April, 1924, California hotelier Vernon Goodwin and Billie Nichols, by now firmly ensconced as Child's second-in-command, arrived at the Park County Hospital in Livingston and, after further lengthy negotiations, purchased the camping company for \$660,000. Press releases announcing the transfer named Goodwin as president of the company, and the omnipresent A. L. Smith, Child's Helena banker, served as secretary and treasurer. Within a year Child traveled to Cleveland to sign a purchase order for another eighty White busses, but even then would not admit to owning the camps, much as White had denied his own role to Child.²⁵

So, as of 1925, Harry Child finally secured what he had coveted for years, a practical monopoly of all Yellowstone concessions. But Hays, White, and Emery proved to be the true beneficiaries of the camping company episode. All three made a handsome profit in the transaction. That same year Hays became president of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Companies; in 1926, he added the Glacier National Park Transport Company to his portfolio. He retained these businesses for almost thirty years. White and Emery, close friends as well as business associates, likely benefitted financially from his acquisitions. Child had paid \$660,000 for a business that he could have bought for \$150,000 five years earlier, but had missed the opportunity due to chronic frugality.²⁶

Child's record of accomplishments in Yellowstone has remained unequaled. He almost single-handedly provided the means by which millions of visitors experienced the park. He built magnificent hotels, such as those at Lake, Canyon, and Old Faithful, edifices that many have considered among the grandest in the world. He brooked no opposition; no other operator approached his level of control. He built such a dynamic business that for decades he and his heirs practically dictated how the park would be run. At his death in 1931, Billie Nichols and a succession of grandchildren took over, and the concessions remained in the family until 1965. But in this one instance a competitor, Howard Hays, proved the winner — this one time, Harry got taken.

24. Bartlett, *A Wilderness Besieged*, p. 174; White to Hays, March 17, 1924, box 3, file "1920–1924 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Child, March 23, 1924, *ibid.*; Child to Hays, March 24, 1924, *ibid.*; White to Hays, March 24, 1924, *ibid.*; Emery to Hays, March 29, 1924, *ibid.*; White to Hays, April 2, 1924, *ibid.*; White to Hays, April 28, 1924, *ibid.*

25. Press release, [1924], box YPC 14, file "YP Lodges and Camps," YNP; Vernon Goodwin to Hays, February 28, 1924, box 3, file "1920–1924 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, AHC; Hays to Child, March 25, 1924, *ibid.*; E. H. Moorman to Emery, April 24, 1924, *ibid.*; Emery to Moorman, April 25, 1924, *ibid.*; Taylor B. Weir to Vard Smith, April 28, 1924, *ibid.*; White to Hays, April 13, 1925, *ibid.*; "Minutes of Directors' Meeting of Yellowstone Park Camps Company," May 8, 1924, *ibid.*

26. Hays, "Occupation," AHC; Emery to Hays, March 29, 1924, box 3, file "1920–1924 correspondence," Howard H. Hays Collection, *ibid.*; Emery to Hays, April 25, 1924, *ibid.*; Hays to White and Emery, May 9, 1925, box 3, file "1925–1926 correspondence," *ibid.*; Child to Hays, July 6, 1925, *ibid.* Child took his beating with unusually good humor, probably because he truly liked Hays. Upon hearing of Hays' upcoming venture in Sequoia, he wrote that "I note with pleasure that you are going to promote a sanitarium for knocked-out National Park officials. Please reserve rooms there for the writer, W. M. Nichols . . . also I presume you have already engaged accommodations for Director Mather and Superintendent Albright. This whole bunch of artists is on the way."

HEBARD COLLECTION ACQUISITIONS

Recent acquisitions in the Hebard Collection, University of Wyoming Libraries
Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert

The Grace Raymond Hebard Wyoming Collection is a branch of the University of Wyoming Libraries, housed in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room in the American Heritage Center in Laramie. Primarily a research collection, the core of this collection is Miss Hebard's personal library which was donated to the university libraries. Further donations have been significant in the development of this collection. The Hebard Collection is considered to be the most comprehensive collection on Wyoming in the state.

To mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of Yellowstone National Park, acquisitions cited in this issue of *Annals of Wyoming* relate to the history and natural history of our nation's first national park.

If you have any questions about these materials or the Hebard Collection, you may contact Ms. Hert by phone at 307-766-6245; by email to <thert@uwyo.edu>; or you can access the Hebard homepage at <<http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>>.

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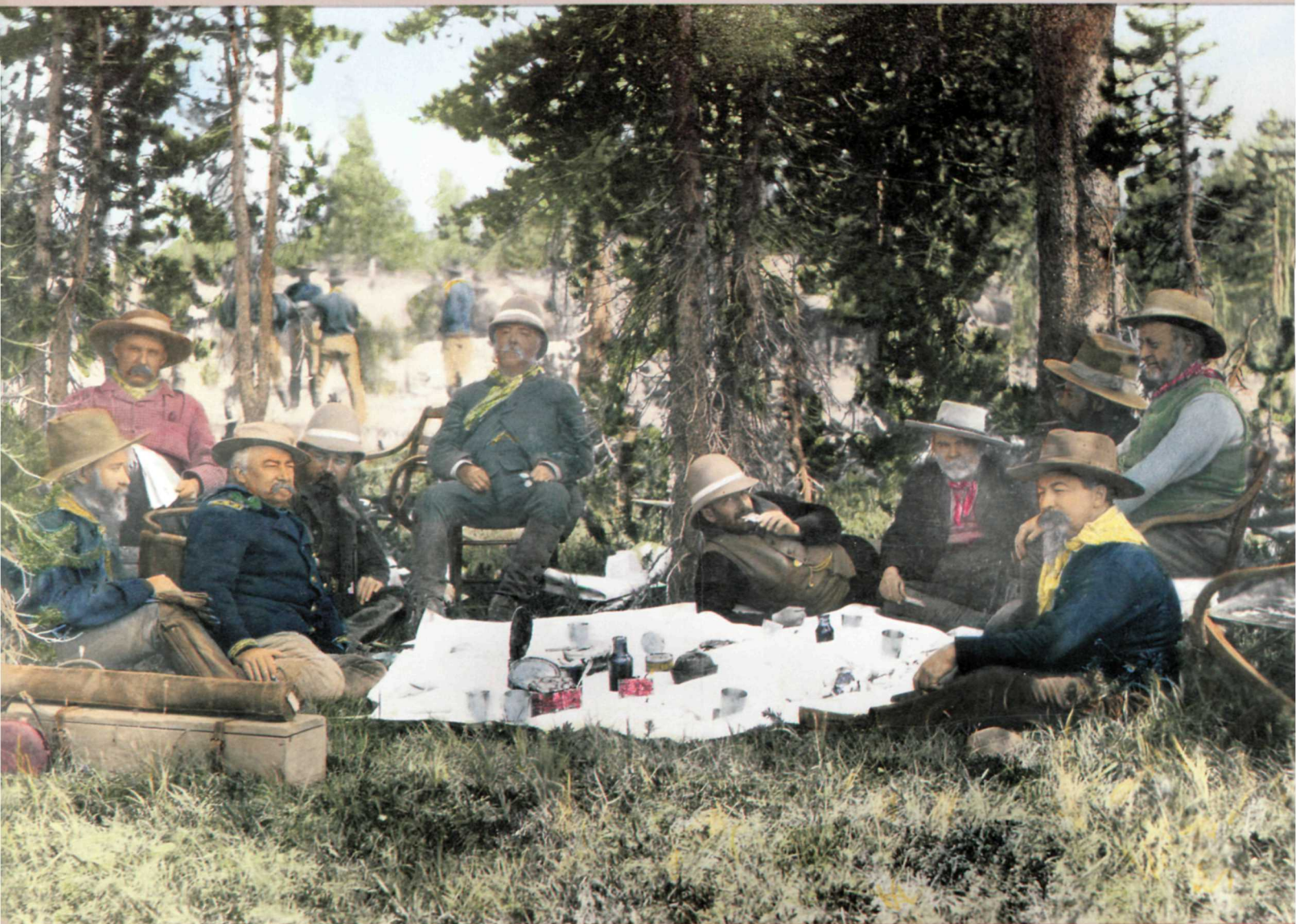
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Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal

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SPECIAL ISSUE COMMEMORATING THE
125TH ANNIVERSARY OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

On the cover:

The summer of 1883 in Yellowstone was noteworthy for the opening of the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company's facilities, the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad's branch line to the park, and the first visit by a United States president. President Chester Arthur traveled to Wyoming on the Union Pacific Railroad, and then from Green River to Fort Washakie by wagon. From there he rode horseback, accompanied by a troop of cavalry soldiers and 150 pack mules (with the requisite wranglers and packers) to tote the tents, beds, furniture, linens, china, silver, crystal and gourmet provisions that were needed to make his expedition comfortable. His party included General Phil Sheridan, Secretary of War Robert T. Lincoln, Senator George Vest of Missouri, Governor John S. Crosby of Montana Territory, and other dignitaries. In the cover photograph the president and his fellow travelers are shown picnicking in a grove of pines. President Arthur is seated in the chair at the center. (Photograph from the collection of the Riverton Museum)

On the back cover is a photograph showing some of the first cars to enter Yellowstone National Park after the August 1, 1915 opening of the park to motorized vehicles. (Photograph from the collection of the Pioneer Museum in Lander)

Grateful acknowledgement is made of the assistance provided by Tamsen L. Hert in the preparation of this issue of *Annals of Wyoming*. Ms. Hert was instrumental in the solicitation of appropriate articles and the acquisition of illustrations.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming: The Wyoming History Journal* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions, queries, and requests for detailed authors' guidelines should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P.O. Box 4256 University Station, Laramie, WY 82071.

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The Wyoming State Historical Society

The Wyoming State Historical Society is a confederation of more than 20 local chapters located in every area of the state. Members enjoy the frequent gatherings of their local groups and participate in programs and activities that preserve and interpret their communities' history. Several times each year, members from all across Wyoming come together for major events where they celebrate common historical interests.

Membership in the society is open to everyone. Member benefits include a subscription to *Annals of Wyoming: The Wyoming History Journal*, a quarterly journal devoted to broader public understanding of all aspects of Wyoming history; and *Wyoming History News*, the society's newsletter, which is published ten times each year. Membership dues also provide support for a comprehensive awards program that recognizes people who are doing something to preserve and interpret local and state history; for Wyoming History Day, which allows thousands of Wyoming school children to participate in history projects and to compete at district, state and national history day events; for research grants that support the study and publication of Wyoming history; and for a variety of special projects which help preserve and interpret the state's rich history.

If you are already a member of the Wyoming State Historical Society we solicit your continued interest, involvement and support. If you are not a member, or if you know of other non-members who share an interest in Wyoming history, we urge you (and them) to join. Contact a member of your local historical society, or write to the Wyoming State Historical Society at 1740H184 Dell Range Blvd, Cheyenne, WY 82009.

Membership dues are: \$20 (single), \$30 (joint), \$15 (student, under 21 years of age), \$40 (institutions). For those who wish to support the society in a more substantial way, participation at one of the following levels is appreciated: contributing member (\$100-\$249), sustaining member (\$250-\$499), patron (\$500-\$999), donor (\$1,000 and over). In addition to all benefits of regular membership, participants at these levels are recognized in *Wyoming History News*.



The northwest corner of what is today the state of Wyoming attracted special attention from visitors long before it was set aside as the nation's first national park.

And while the natural features that make Yellowstone National Park so spectacular remain basically the same, the experience of a park visit has changed dramatically with new modes of transportation, improvements in accommodations, and the values of visitors. This special issue examines the history of some of those changes while acknowledging the 125th anniversary of the founding of Yellowstone — in 1872.

Particular attention is given to the years between 1910 and 1920, when the automobile came of age. That focus is significant because it was the automobile that brought an end to a Yellowstone era that had been dominated by a moneyed class of visitors who could afford to travel to the park via the railroads, pay for the luxurious accommodations offered in Yellowstone's hotels, and enjoy the scenery while being driven about in the park's stagecoaches.

The opening of the park to automobiles on August 1, 1915 not only made the park more accessible to a much larger group of visitors, it also changed the nature of park accommodations. Ultimately, that change led to the kind of Yellowstone experience that we know today.