

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yellowstone National Park



The Old Faithful Inn Turns 100



The Old Faithful Inn appears to have grown out of the very ground on which it sits. Evoking the surrounding wilderness, the Inn is a human-made complement to the unmatched marvel of the inspiring Upper Geyser Basin and the one-of-a-kind Old Faithful Geyser. With its imposing scale; informal massing; and great, pitched roof, the Old Faithful Inn architecturally echoes the shapes of the surrounding mountains.

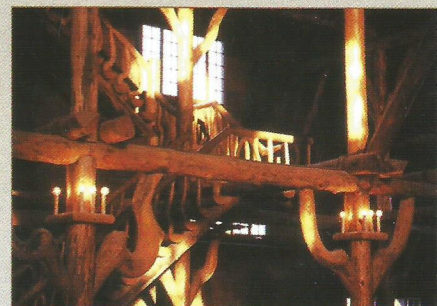
The Inn was commissioned by early park concessioners in 1902 and designed by the 29-year-old architect Robert C. Reamer. The building was constructed in three major phases. The original center section—the prominent gable roof covering the immense lobby, the dining rooms, kitchen wing, and two guest room wings—was built in the fall, winter, and spring of 1903-1904. The east wing guest rooms were completed in 1913-1914; the west wing in 1927.

Lodgepole pines and massive stones figure prominently in the construction material of the Inn, a building sometimes advertised as the world's largest log hotel. While the outside walls are bolstered and ornamented with lodgepole pine, it is from within the immense lobby that one sees what can be done with these logs. The view allows one to gain respect for a now-vanished class of craftsmen who, with adz and ax, hammer, and saw, were able to create such fascinating yet sturdy designs. That these craftsmen

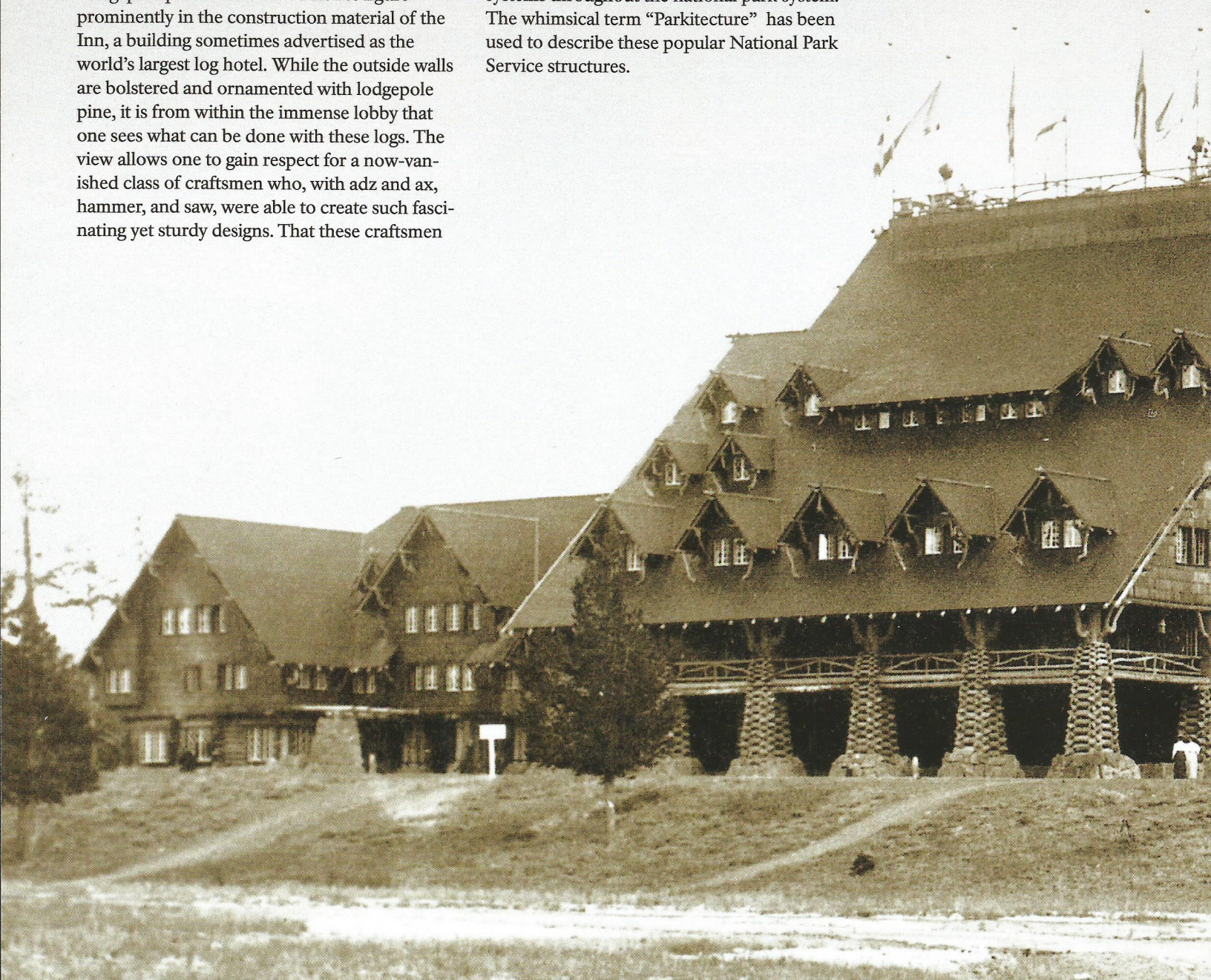
were able to artfully incorporate a forest of logs with deformities, knobs, burls, and strange turns and twists is especially striking.

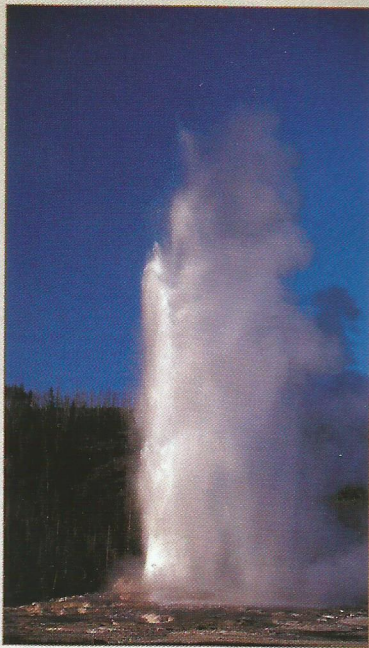
The great stone fireplace is another compelling feature of the lobby. In reality, four fireplaces feed into one great chimney. Because the spacious and lofty lobby accentuates the coolness of the surrounding mountains, a fire can be enjoyed even in August.

The idea of designing with nature flourished in the National Park Service during the early decades of the twentieth century. Architects, landscape architects, and engineers combined native wood and stone to create appealing structures that seemed to fit naturally within the majestic park landscapes. Influential professionals like Mary Colter, Herbert Maier, Robert C. Reamer, and Thomas C. Vint applied these principles to their structures, landscapes, and road systems throughout the national park system. The whimsical term "Parkitecture" has been used to describe these popular National Park Service structures.

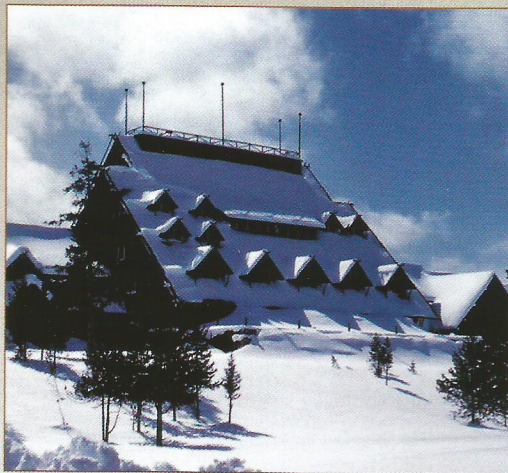


Burled pine was used in staircases and other details of the Inn.





Old Faithful Geyser is still as spectacular as it was a century ago.



Winter blankets the Old Faithful Inn with snow. While the Inn is not open in the winter, visitors can stay at the nearby Snow Lodge.

About the Inn

- ❖ The builders obtained materials from within the park. They used lodgepole pine inside, volcanic rock for the fireplaces, and obsidian sand in the concrete.
- ❖ In 1904, the Inn had 140 guest rooms; today it has 327.
- ❖ The lobby is six stories high.
- ❖ The Inn's original door key resides in the park's museum collection, one of almost 3,000 museum items related to the Inn.
- ❖ The lobby rafters have been cleaned by people using climbing gear, housekeepers using long knotted strings of sheets, and by compressed air.
- ❖ Approximately 350 employees work at the Inn each year.
- ❖ Movie and TV stars who have stayed at the inn include Henry Fonda, Vincent Price, the Three Stooges, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Michael J. Fox, and Jason Alexander.
- ❖ Many U.S. Presidents have visited the Inn, including Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and William Clinton.





The Architect

Architect Robert Reamer brought a different vision with him to Yellowstone. He believed it was possible to create a structure that would appear to have grown out of its surroundings, a structure inside and out that would seem to be an extension of the wilderness. At the same time, he believed that a hotel such as this could provide all the modern conveniences that any world-class hotel offered. He believed that hotel guests could feel completely secure while at the same time feel connected to the wilderness outside.

Reamer's vision as embodied in the Old Faithful Inn caused a revolution in architecture in

national parks that has continued to this day. His style of architecture, where the building is designed to fit into the landscape, is called "rustic architecture" or "parkitecture."

While the Old Faithful Inn is Reamer's most famous design, it is not his only Yellowstone project. After completing the Inn, Reamer designed and oversaw construction of the Grand Canyon Hotel; the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, Executive House, and Mammoth cottages; and the renovation of the Lake Hotel. In addition to the rustic style, his various designs incorporated the Prairie, neo-classical, and colonial styles, depending on the setting.



Robert C. Reamer

*To be at discord with the landscape would be almost a crime.
To try to improve upon it would be an impertinence.*
—Robert Reamer

Anniversary Events

Tuesday, June 1

1-4 PM

**U.S. Postal Pictorial
Cancellation Stamp
Lobby of the Inn**

*To celebrate the actual day of
opening, join the Old Faithful
Post Office staff for a pictorial
stamp cancellation.*

June 19-20

August 28-29

All weekend

Xanterra Heritage Days

Vicinity of the Inn

*Special programs and activities.
Details at the Old Faithful Inn.*

All Summer

Interpretive Programs

Old Faithful Inn

*Explore the Old Faithful Inn
with a costumed tour guide
from Xanterra Parks and
Resorts.*

Old Faithful Area

*Explore Old Faithful's astounding
hydrothermal resources with
a National Park Service inter-
pretive ranger. Details at the
Old Faithful Visitor Center.*

Exhibits

Old Faithful Inn

*Enjoy special exhibits all
summer in the lobby.*

*The following photographers generously allowed the use of their images in this publication:
David M. Morris, Fred Pflughoft Stock Photo, Pinedale, WY (front and back cover).
Fred Pflughoft, Fred Pflughoft Stock Photo, Pinedale, WY (Inn detail).
All other photographs were provided by the National Park Service.*



This publication was made possible by a generous grant from the Yellowstone Park Foundation. The foundation is dedicated to funding projects and programs that protect, preserve, and enhance Yellowstone National Park. To find out how you can help, contact the foundation at:

Yellowstone Park Foundation ♦ 222 East Main Street ♦ Suite 301 ♦ Bozeman, MT 59715 ♦ www.ypf.org