

THE NATIONAL ARROW



A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound



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TRAIL FOUNDER'S OFFICE BUILDING BECOMES MUSEUM

Phyllis Herrick, indefatigable director of the Parmley Historical Museum in Ipswich, SD, has announced the near-completion of an additional museum dedicated to the memory of Joseph Parmley, founder of the 1912 Yellowstone Trail Association. His Land Office in downtown Ipswich has been restored and offers the visitor a glimpse into the world of the "dreamer and visionary" who saw the need for better roads in general and a transcontinental road in particular and who passionately executed that vision.

The restoration is the product of years of work, of donations of time and money and of research. Every inch, including the fireplace, has been cleaned, painted, replaced, brought up to code, rewired, reframed and replumbed. Dr. Richard Parmley, great-grandson of Joe, was especially instrumental in bringing this museum to fruition.

Joe Parmley made his living as a land agent, forerunner of today's real estate agent. But his civic interests were widespread. He was a former newspaperman, state highway commissioner, legislator in the SD House of Representatives, founder of the International Peace Garden, and was asked to run for governor, US Senate, and Congress. It is the intent to allow visitors comfortable time at the museum to look at Parmley's effects, pictures of the Ipswich environs,



and beginnings of the famous Yellowstone Trail to more fully understand the man and his times.

The J.W. Parmley Historical Museum across town was also the recipient of a surprise gift. Herrick eschewed the normal, difficult path of grant application, and wrote personally to South Dakota Governor Bill Janklow, pleading the case for funds for that non-profit organization. To her utter amazement, Phyllis got a phone call from the Governor himself and a check for twice the \$10,000 she had asked for! The force of her argument, the unusual approach, and the fact that the funding was not for individual gain but community and historical good sealed her success, she felt. The Parmley Historical Museum now sports completely new floors and other rebuilding in the basement. Also, museum visitors won't fall down the rear steps anymore.

Plan to visit both the new Parmley Land Office Museum and the Parmley Historical Museum when you are on the Trail in South Dakota. Both will be open for regular hours beginning May, 2003. ☺



POTENTIAL OF ROADSIDE HERITAGE SIGNS – MONTANA EXAMPLE

Jon Axline, Montana Department of Transportation Historian and friend of the Yellowstone Trail, is the person who writes those neat bits of history on Montana's roadside heritage signs. The sign at the Natural Pier Bridge on the Yellowstone



Trail in far western Montana mentions the phenomenon of natural stone as a bridge pier, and also acknowledges the influence of the Yellowstone Trail Association in its building in 1916.

Axline says that signs began to be erected in 1935 telling Montana's story to the traveler, but interest waned in the 1960's. With renewed interest in signage beginning about 1985, signs again were erected but they now tell the state's story from the Indian point-of-view and without language and information that is now considered racist.

Two signs were recently erected near the Yellowstone Trail at Hysham and Big Timber. The Department is always looking for suggestions. Montana readers should suggest sites of importance to Yellowstone Trail history. Jon is at the MDOT, Helena, jaxline@state.mt.us. ☺



Begun in 1912 in Ipswich, South Dakota, the Yellowstone Trail was envisioned very early as an ocean-to-ocean automobile highway "from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound." It was the first such route through the northern tier of states. ☺

THE NATIONAL TRUST HEARS ABOUT THE TRAIL

Omaha, NE was the site of the third biennial "Preserving the Historic Road in America" conference this past April. It was sponsored by a variety of interested national groups, major among them being: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration. The National Scenic Byways Program also had a presence. The goal of the conference was to share ideas and success/failure stories about preservation, documenting and marking old roads in various corners of the nation.

John and Alice Ridge were surprised at being selected to speak about the history and geography of the 3600 mile Yellowstone Trail. The Lincoln Highway, a contemporary of the Yellowstone Trail, had been featured at past conventions. However, the audience took kindly to the Ridges and this new topic and their digitally projected pictures. Copies of the *National Arrow* were made available. Many people knew nothing of the Trail or current efforts to revive its history, so this exposure was profitable educationally.

The process of marking and preserving a road is apparently long and arduous. Federal, state and local agencies *ad infinitum* must be located, consulted, and obeyed. Funds must be raised. The Lincoln Highway group is benefitting from the \$100,000 congressional appropriation to the National Park Service to "study the possibility of marking the highway." Other programs demand that a broad base of groups be signed on to prove that the effort has popular support. Speakers told of their 10 to 25 year old projects which finally prevailed! And those were fairly short stretches of road. Accomplishing a marking and/or preservation project over the length of the nation is daunting, if not impossible. For the Yellowstone Trail, the first step may be through the National Scenic Byways Program which requires individual state initiatives. ☺

"Wisconsin Stories," the popular television series highlighting interesting state topics, featured the Yellowstone Trail in its July 11th episode. Entitled "Car Show," the half-hour program also included the early auto industry and auto racing in Wisconsin. The series is co-produced by Wisconsin Public Television and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

During the summer of 2001 the WPT crew filmed the Trail around Chippewa Falls. Area resident, Bob Baker, and his 1929 Ford cheerfully ferried some of the crew about, cramming the crew and equipment in the rumble seat for unique shots of the Trail. Finding a portion of the Trail in the area that was still gravel was a challenge. Host Debbie Kmetz of the Wisconsin Historical Society was quick to grasp the meaning and the importance of the Trail, making her interview questions relevant. Since not many people are aware of the Trail, this was a good educational and entertaining introduction. ☺



DEDICATION SET FOR NORTH FOND DU LAC'S YELLOWSTONE TRAIL PARK

The Village of North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, has found itself with a new park, and the village board chose to name it Yellowstone Trail Park. Village Administrator Karen Matze explained:

"Recently the village made significant improvements to the Hwy 175 corridor that passes through the village and was once part of the Yellowstone Trail. As a part of the construction project, the village acquired several parcels of land. This location is directly across the street from what was once known as the Yellowstone Garage. The parcels have been converted into greenspace and we will name the space in honor of the Yellowstone Garage in the 1920's Yellowstone Trail."



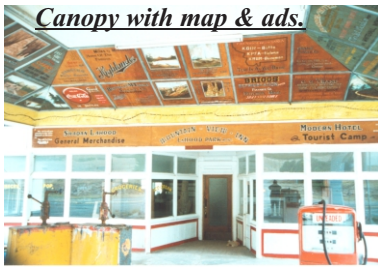
The big "Trail Day" dedication is set for Friday, October 18 at 2:00 P.M. featuring the high school band, old cars with historical society members in period costumes plus an ice cream social. Alice and John Ridge will present a pictorial history of the Trail. For more information call the Fond du Lac CVB 800-937-9123 or e-mail to glenn@fdl.com. ☺

. . AND BAD NEWS

Last spring an original building on the Yellowstone Trail burned down. The building was a combination gas station and grocery store which had been part of a camp site established by Shadan LaHood and called LaHood Park on current maps. Early in the 20th century he had established a camp ground at Jefferson Island near Cardwell west of Three Forks, Montana. The Yellowstone Trail ran right next to his business from 1914 to the late 1920's. Hearing that the Yellowstone Trail was to be moved to a better road to the east side of the Jefferson River c.1928, he moved his garage/campsite/store to its present site on what is now MT Hwy 2.



The fire apparently started in the owner's living quarters at the rear of the now defunct garage. It was a complete loss. The fire took the service station's large awning which had a map of the 3600-mile Yellowstone Trail painted on its four sides. A tour of the property in 1996, led by Jefferson Valley Museum director Roy Millegan, revealed the painting to be in remarkably good shape as it was painted on the sheltered inside. Although it was not completely accurate, the map represented a rare piece of history and showed LaHood's interest in the Trail.



Shadan LaHood was listed as a member of the Yellowstone Trail Association in 1921 and 1927. It is presumed he was a member other years also as he hosted the Western Montana state Yellowstone Trail Association meeting at Jefferson Island in 1925. Millegan and the museum are now faced with the very difficult problem of encouraging the owner to recreate this bit of history.

TOURISM GRANT RECEIVED TO PROMOTE THE TRAIL

Wisconsin's Gov. Scott McCallum announced last May that the Stevens Point Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) received a \$19,591 state tourism grant to promote the *Yellowstone Trail in Wisconsin* campaign. The campaign is designed to increase the number of visitors to the attractions in 13 of the 18 counties along the historic Yellowstone Trail.

This is the second year the *Yellowstone Trail in Wisconsin* campaign received such funding. The funds will be used, in part, for publishing 65,000 new brochures advertising towns along the Trail. (Sounds like the old Yellowstone Trail Association of 90 years ago, doesn't it?)

YELLOWSTONE TRAIL SYMBOLS, LOGOS, AND SIGNS

A faithful reader from Pasco, Washington, made us shamefaced when she pointed out that we had included a picture of a yellow striped "military-looking shell" with no caption. It was an example of a Trail marker and we neglected to so label it! We are including that picture with a caption, along with several other types of symbols used by the Yellowstone Trail Association in its 18 year life. They painted anything: posts, telegraph poles, rocks, sandstone hoo-dos; they made metal signs with the Trail name and some with only a black arrow on yellow background; sometimes it was just a yellow "R" or "L" to guide the traveler to the correct direction. Keep your eyes open and you may spot an undiscovered sign. (Let us know if you do!)



The standard metal road sign used across the country as soon as the Association could afford it. Variations replaced the arrow with an L or R to indicate turns.



Signs indicating right turns painted on buildings. These can be found in Owen, Wisconsin and in Terry, Montana



The hoo-doo that was not identified in the last issue of the National Arrow. It still remains near Watauga, SD. The other two are also still to be seen near the North/South Dakota border. These wind-worn rocks are up to ten feet tall and were a major project to drag miles across the prairie to paint and use as route markers.



1950's picture of old codgers in front of Yellowstone Trail sign on building in Ismay, Montana.

Painting the YT arrow on a pole near Cadott, Wisconsin

The Valparaiso, Indiana street sign is an example of the many streets and roads across the country retaining the Trail name.



WHY ARE YOU RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER?

As faithful readers will recall, and new readers will learn, this newsletter was created to focus attention on the Yellowstone Trail to revive interest in this national treasure. That old auto route (1912-1930) carried thousands of tourists from the eastern states to Yellowstone Park and sites west. One of the functions of private trail associations then was to draw tourists to towns both as destinations and as service points for the long distance traveler. A more complete history of the Yellowstone Trail is available in Vol. 1, No. 1 of this newsletter. The old route is still there, breathing quietly under, next to and on Interstate, state, county and township roads. The resurrection of the history of this old route has been adopted by some convention and visitors bureaus, historical societies and businesses to again point tourists toward historic and current recreational features.

You are receiving this newsletter to thank you if you are one of many people who helped ferret out information about the Trail or as an invitation to become part of the effort to rediscover the Yellowstone Trail. There is no cost for this newsletter, at least until a Trail association is formed. ☺

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The last issue of *The National Arrow* listed 12 ideas for individual and/or local action to commemorate the Trail. We have some updates about those ideas to report:

- One idea was to plant trees along the Trail. We printed a picture of a group in Wisconsin doing just that. We are pleased to report that the trees are doing well and will make a real difference in making the Trail enjoyable.
- Painting rocks yellow with a black arrow has been popular. We have had three reports of business and non-profit groups doing just that.
- Paint your own signs! Stencils are now available to help you. They are of heavy plastic featuring the Trail logo. You can spray paint your own sign. There is a rumor of someone doing that near Reed Point, MT. Watch for them.



- A new metal 12"x18" sign is now available to label your property or museum or city "welcome" sign. Lamm Gardens has used such a sign to identify its interest in the Trail which runs past the business in Germantown, Wisconsin.

- Bend the ear of a state legislator about erecting Yellowstone Trail road signs. Work with your state or regional convention and visitors bureau. ☺

THE NATIONAL ARROW

The National Arrow is designed in the tradition of *The Arrow*, the newsletter of the original Yellowstone Trail Association early in the century. *The Arrow* was sent to members of the Yellowstone Trail Association. These members had paid dues to the Association to support its efforts to improve the highway and attract tourists to services along the route.

The National Arrow will be published sporadically as time and resources permit. It is mightily dependent on expressions of interest by the readers and the readers' submissions of news items, stories, opinions, questions, and plans. There is no cost for this newsletter.

The purposes of *The National Arrow* are to:

- promote the Yellowstone Trail and to increase knowledge about and interest in the Trail;
- provide a communication service among interested people;
- report events, government initiatives, grants, marketing efforts and plans related to the Trail; and
- suggest promotional efforts, events and tourism opportunities.

Questions, stories and news items about the historic Trail and current related activities may be directed to:

John or Alice Ridge
Mail: 7000 South Shore Drive, Altoona, WI, 54720
E-mail: jridge@yellowstonetrail.org
Phone or FAX: 715-834-5992.
Web site response: www.yellowstonetrail.org ☺

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The following are available from Yellowstone Trail Publishers:
See www.yellowstonetrail.org or write to Yellowstone Trail Publishers, 7000 South Shore Drive, Altoona, WI 54720.

Inquiries: arrow@yellowstonetrail.org

Introducing the Yellowstone Trail; A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound, 1912-1930. Paperback, 96 pages. \$5.95 each book plus \$1.50 S&H for any number of books.

A reproduction: *1919 Yellowstone Trail Association Guide* brochure. \$4.00 each plus \$1.00 S&H for any number of brochures.

Also Trail Logo stickers, tee-shirts, 12" x 18" logo signs, standard street signs, and stencils. ☺

THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Yellowstone Trail Association consists of the authors of this newsletter and any others who tell us that they are members. Sometime in the not near future the Association may become a bit more formal if the interest emerges. Let us know what you think the Association should become. And tell us what you might be willing to do. ☺