

THE NATIONAL ARROW



A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound



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THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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“TRAIL DAYS” TO OPEN NEW YELLOWSTONE TRAIL MUSEUM

In the last issue of the National Arrow we announced the near-completion of a new museum in Ipswich, South Dakota. Well, it is now ready to open with a bang June 7-8. Called the Yellowstone Trail Museum, it is right downtown in Joseph Parmley’s old land office building. Parmley, the founder of the Yellowstone Trail, was a land agent, or dealer in real estate and in land speculation.

The official ribbon cutting which opens the new museum will occur at 9:30 AM Saturday, June 7. The opening celebration will be accompanied by many festivities that weekend. Arts in the Park, featuring artists’ works and crafts will occur in the park across from the Beebe Library. Music will be featured in the park’s band shell, and bull riding by professional riders will provide entertainment. There will be an old fashioned pie contest, and antique cars will be present. The town will be festooned with banners, and, no doubt, there will be picnics, reunions, and general hoopla. In the heyday of the Yellowstone Trail, 1912-1930, many communities would close down businesses and all turn out on the same day, specified by the Trail Association, to work on the Trail and to picnic and have games. This was quite a promotional stunt, well covered by the press and politicians. The Yellowstone Trail Association called it “Trail Days.” Ipswich has had “Trail Days” in the past with the 1939, 1940, and 1948 celebrations chronicled in the Ipswich centennial book (1883-1983). This will be called Trail Days 2003.

A few blocks away, the J.W. Parmley Historical Museum will also welcome guests. Built in 1919, the Parmley home/museum displays artifacts and furniture as the Parmley’s used them until about 1940. Phyllis Herrick, curator of both museums, reported that a buffet belonging to the Parmleys was recently “returned to the home after 66 years and now stands just where the Parmleys had it.”



Parmley House Museum



YT Museum Ipswich, SD

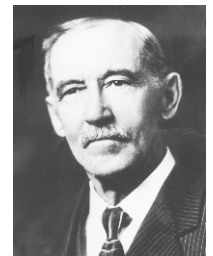
On April 23, 1912, Joe Parmley called a meeting of civic movers and shakers to discuss repairing the poor road between Ipswich and Aberdeen. That was the beginning of what became the famous transcontinental Yellowstone Trail, “a good road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound.” Over the course of eighteen years, Parmley and friends caused

many county boards in thirteen states to build roads or connect roads into a long, continuous 3800 mile chain to usher in the dawn of the auto age and to introduce long-distance tourism. He was a practical dreamer who put everything into that dream, even personally paying for yellow paint to mark the road.

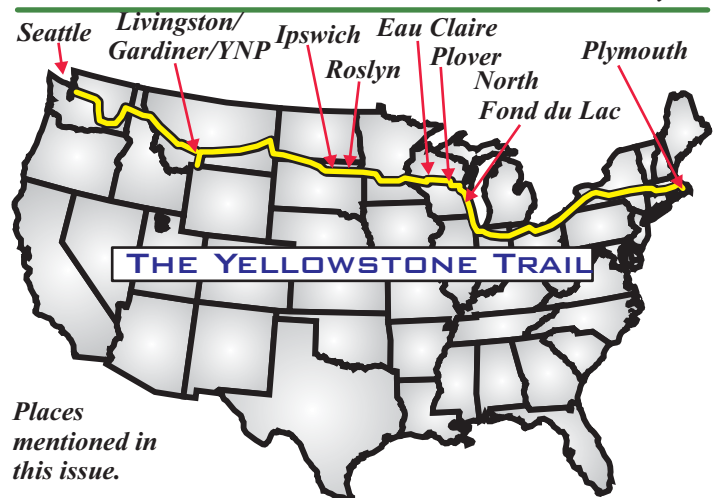
Parmley packed much life into his life. In addition to running his land agency and the Yellowstone Trail Association,

he was: admitted to the bar; superintendent of schools; twice a state legislator; register of deeds; newspaper owner; South Dakota highway commissioner; president of the state Good Roads Association, the Northern Development League and the Canada to Canal Highway Association; was posthumously inducted into the South Dakota highway Hall of Fame, and more.

So come to Ipswich and relive history. Join the Trail Days! ☺



J. W. Parmley



Places mentioned in this issue.

A NEW MAGAZINE ABOUT OLD HIGHWAYS

Our readers may be interested in other old highways as well as the Yellowstone Trail. Thus, we are including the following press release from the new American Road magazine (see the enclosed brochure). The first issue will be on newsstands in early May.

AMERICAN ROAD Celebrating our two-lane highways of yesteryear . . . and the joys of driving them today.

AMERICAN ROAD, a quarterly, four-color, nationally-distributed magazine chronicling America's historic highways, will debut in the spring of 2003.

A product of veteran road writers Thomas Repp, Jim Ross, and the creative team at Mock Turtle Press, **AMERICAN ROAD** brings the country's highway heritage alive from coast to coast, tracing the pathways and telling the tales of the Yellowstone Trail, Route 66, the Lincoln Highway, and a full array of other auto roads with historic significance or nostalgic appeal. Aimed at those with an appetite to explore, **AMERICAN ROAD** is the ideal vehicle for the proactive adventurer and armchair traveler alike.

AMERICAN ROAD will boast a staff of seasoned designers and feature writers, including Gregory Franzwa ("The Lincoln Highway" series); John and Alice Ridge ("Introducing the Yellowstone Trail"); and Pulitzer Prize nominee Michael Wallis ("Route 66: The Mother Road").

The annual subscription rate for **AMERICAN ROAD** costs \$15.95. A two-year subscription costs \$27.95. The newsstand price is \$4.95 per issue. Subscription orders should be mailed to: **AMERICAN ROAD**, P.O. Box 3168, Lynnwood, WA 98046-3168. Additional information is available at www.mockturtlepress.com.

TRAVELED THE LENGTH OF THE TRAIL FROM WA TO MA

Andy Faller is a hardy traveler and "off-the-beaten-path" road buff. In August he drove his pick-up truck from his home in South Carolina to New York City, got on the Lincoln Highway and followed it some 3500 miles west. From California, he traveled north to Seattle, jumped on the Yellowstone Trail and followed it to Boston, another some 3500 miles. This was something he had wanted to do for a long time, he said. As of this writing he was yet to provide a transcript of his tape recorded thoughts as he weathered the good and bad of his voyage. His general reaction was an enthusiastic recommendation to travel the old roads. He found that he could travel at his own relaxed pace and could actually talk with residents. Passing east through Wisconsin, he dined at the historic Hammond (WI) Hotel which sits right on the Trail, presently US 12 and which hosts the annual Running of the Llamas in August.

Another traveler, Lawrence Diggs of Roslyn, South Dakota, drove the entire length of the Trail in 2000, but his trip bore a

NORTH FOND DU LAC DEDICATES ITS YT PARK

It was the worst October weather possible, but the stalwarts came out to help the Village of North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, dedicate their new Yellowstone Trail Park. It was a festive occasion with speeches, a slide presentation about the Yellowstone Trail, period costumes and the high school band in full force. The expected antique car chose not to brave the elements.

The idea of a Yellowstone Trail Park began the previous spring when the village acquired several parcels of land that sit on the former Trail directly across the street from the building known for a long time as the Yellowstone Garage. The parcels were turned into green space and the village wanted to name that space in honor of the Trail.

After much planning and meetings with village officials, the Fond du Lac Convention and Visitors Bureau, landscapers, and with local historians, plans were in place. In keeping with the tradition of the original Yellowstone Trail Association of 91 years ago, much of the success of the project was due to enthusiastic volunteers, called "boosters" back then.

If you are ever in North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, swing by the junction of Prospect Ave., Winnebago St. and Minnesota Ave. to visit the park. You can't miss the beautiful sign! ☺



Dedication of the YT Park with the new sign

different mission. Diggs runs a small specialty museum devoted to the history and uses of vinegar. He was concerned with drawing his small community together around a theme. The near-by Yellowstone Trail seemed to provide the coalescing agent. Lawrence set out on a whirlwind tour of the Trail, not really seeking the solace of back roads, but seeking to advertise the Trail itself. As a national and international vinegar consultant and businessman, Lawrence knows the advantages of advertising. Along the Trail he stopped at newspaper offices, and radio stations, sure that they would be interested in this oddity of "The Vinegar Man," as he calls himself, traveling across the country on a little known route. He was right. He got those interviews and the Trail got its 15 minutes of fame. He distributed thousands of bright yellow brochures concerning the Trail, some of which were still available recently in information kiosks. ☺

SPOTLIGHT ON . . .

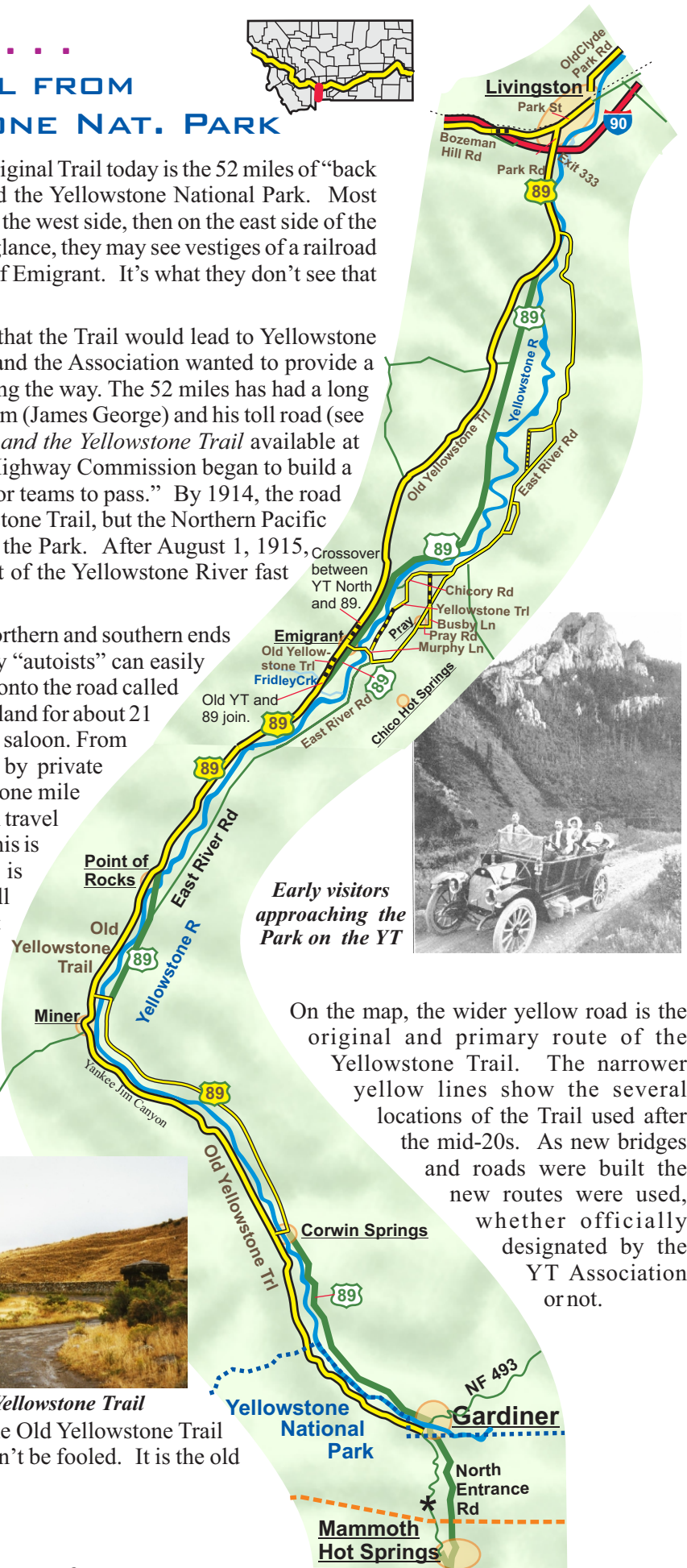
THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL FROM LIVINGSTON TO YELLOWSTONE NAT. PARK

One of the longest relatively unchanged sections of the original Trail today is the 52 miles of “back road” from Livingston, Montana, south to Gardiner and the Yellowstone National Park. Most people zip along US 89 toward the Park, running first on the west side, then on the east side of the Yellowstone River, and never glance around. If they did glance, they may see vestiges of a railroad grade, an interesting “slide” of rocks and the tiny town of Emigrant. It’s what they don’t see that also tells a fascinating tale.

The Yellowstone Trail Association envisioned early on that the Trail would lead to Yellowstone National Park. The Park was a great draw for tourists and the Association wanted to provide a good road to the Park through Trail members’ towns along the way. The 52 miles has had a long history of wagon roads, with colorful stories of Yankee Jim (James George) and his toll road (see Doris Whithorn’s *Yankee Jim’s National Park Tollroad and the Yellowstone Trail* available at Gateway Museum, Livingston). In 1912, the Montana Highway Commission began to build a road with convict labor which would be “wide enough for teams to pass.” By 1914, the road was good enough for autos, and was used by the Yellowstone Trail, but the Northern Pacific Railroad branch line was still the favored way to get to the Park. After August 1, 1915, when autos were permitted into the Park, this road west of the Yellowstone River fast equaled the train in popularity.

Some of the route is on flat land, especially at the most northern and southern ends of the route. At the northern end of the route, present day “autoists” can easily turn right off of US89 about five miles out of Livingston onto the road called Old Yellowstone Trail North. The road runs on fairly flat land for about 21 miles to the tiny, historic town of Emigrant with its 1902 saloon. From Emigrant to “Point of Rocks” the Trail is interrupted by private ranches so one must join US 89 at Emigrant. Just about one mile north of “Point of Rocks” one may leave US89 and again travel the Trail on a road called Old Yellowstone Trail South. This is a must drive. The road is nicely graveled, the scenery is great and the antelope are fearless. At Miner (just a small sign) the road enters Yankee Jim Canyon and the autoist gets a view from his historic highway straight down to the abandoned railroad tracks, thence down to the Yellowstone River and across it, to present US89. How much history can be told by just looking at these four routes in one space!

Yankee Jim Canyon is very narrow and there isn’t much room for a railroad, a river and an auto road. That may be why US89 crosses over to the east side. Getting through Yankee Jim Canyon can be a bit dicey, or impassable, and the Yellowstone Trail is not very visible. Today’s autoists drive on the old Northern Pacific track bed which is graded and graveled instead for a short distance. From Corwin Springs to Gardiner the Old Yellowstone Trail is again a very easy drive. The Old Yellowstone Trail near Gardiner is now called Gardiner Back Road, but don’t be fooled. It is the old Trail. Happy Driving! ☺



Early visitors approaching the Park on the YT

On the map, the wider yellow road is the original and primary route of the Yellowstone Trail. The narrower yellow lines show the several locations of the Trail used after the mid-20s. As new bridges and roads were built the new routes were used, whether officially designated by the YT Association or not.



Park entrance from Yellowstone Trail

LIBRARY HOSTS BUS TOUR ON THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL

The Eau Claire, Wisconsin, "Friends of the Library" hosted a bus tour along 75 miles of the Trail through central Wisconsin.

The morning began grey and rainy but it eventually cleared up and the 40 happy troupers could better see the sights and sites along the way. The group was armed with maps of the route and samples of mile-post-type literature from a 1915 Blue Book. The Trail came to Wisconsin in 1915 and preceded present day roads by almost 90 years, necessitating some adaptation to that fact and to a big bus. The bus driver was an adventurous sort, so he was not fazed by some gravel and the many right angle turns demanded by old roads built along section lines.

The Yellowstone Garage is still operating in Stanley as it did in 1915. The yellow "R" (meaning that the Yellowstone Trail turns right here) is still visible on a wall in Owen. The little town of Unity burned down twice, but some brick buildings are still there on the Trail, dating before 1915. Lunch was at an old restaurant in Hewitt that was important to the famous 1915 relay race the Yellowstone Trail Association held from Chicago to Seattle. A short videotape of humorous 1915 auto scenes created by Kevin Kooistra-Manning of the Billings, Montana, Heritage Center accompanied the trip home. ☺



A few of the Friends of the Library tour

UPCOMING EVENTS/NEWS

Yellowstone Trail Day, Saturday, June 14, 2003 at Heritage Park in **Plover, Wisconsin**, from noon to 5:00. The park consists of a collection of historic buildings, including a cabin from the old Yellowstone Trail Campground. Trail Day will feature tours of the buildings, roving musicians, demonstrations of blacksmithing, root beer from an antique beer delivery truck, picnic fare, antique cars, a Yellowstone Trail slide show, and lots of hoopla.

The city of **South Milwaukee** is **marking the route** of the Yellowstone Trail with yellow signs. The route through Milwaukee and Kenosha may also be marked in the near future. ☺

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 20th 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 is 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.

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 formalized.

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;
- suggest promotional efforts, events and tourism opportunities; and
- encourage and support tourism efforts along the Trail.

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: arrow@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.** ☺