



Official Publication of The Yellowstone Trail Association
"A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"



ROADS TO FREEDOM

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Ed note: *Mac (Malcolm) Nelson, retired English professor and YT traveler, finds the broader world in his writings. As he traveled historic highway US 20 for his book 20 West he wrote beyond the immediate in both geography and chronology. There he provided the reader with a picture of a highway peopled by characters in the last two centuries. Mac pulls from a technological and cultural past to put the YT into a different perspective in the following article about the Pullman Car.*

Roads make strange and wonderful connections. The eastern section of the Yellowstone Trail runs right by my house, on US 20, in Brocton, New York. Half a mile away George Pullman was born, in 1831. After various business ventures in New York, he moved to Chicago (along the Yellowstone Trail, of course) and got rich helping my muddy home town rise above its swampy past.

At the same time, the railroads were beginning to sweep across the US, meeting up in Utah in 1869 and making one nation of several. In the east, they followed the route of the Yellowstone Trail. As Michael Chabon writes in his wild, and wonderful novel, *Telegraph Avenue*, that meant that lots of well off white men would be taking long train trips.

George Pullman saw that they would want to be comfortable on those trips. He invented the "Palace Car," soon to be known as the Pullman car, so that they could sleep and travel comfortably. He got immensely rich building them, and he wanted to service these cars as cheaply as possible.

And THAT meant that a lot of poor Black men from the South could get jobs as Pullman porters. All along the railroads they traveled, working for very little money, living mostly on tips, and learning that there was a bigger, better world for Black people out there. A. Philip Randolph and his Pullman porters union struggled mightily and eventually forced a contract out of the railroads in 1937, long after Pullman's death.

In 1948, Bill Veeck hired Satchel Paige to pitch for his Cleveland Indians. "Stunt!" cried the sports world. Paige, who had been kept out of the majors by his skin color, was 42, maybe older. "Just Bill Veeck looking to get some Black people to pay to see his team?"

No.

When I was 14, my Dad, who loved baseball and equity, took me to Comiskey Park to see Satchel pitch against the White Sox and their lefty ace, Billy Pierce. The old man was indeed a draw—estimates of the crowd that night go to 70,000, and we had to sit on concrete steps—but he was also still a great pitcher. Every pitch was goosebump thrilling. He shut out the White Sox and went on to win six games that year, to help the Indians to the pennant.

Roads make strange and wonderful connections. US highway 61 brought millions of Black people from the South to northern cities and economic freedom. The Yellowstone Trail took George Pullman to Chicago, and Satchel Paige to Chicago and Cleveland, and eventually to the Baseball Hall of Fame (just south of the Yellowstone Trail in Cooperstown, NY).

Without the road and the freedom it offered to Black people, none of this would have happened. And we would all be the poorer. ■

Trail News from Mark

Sociability Run is Fun!

I had the pleasure of attending the Yellowstone Trail "Sociability Run" in Wisconsin from Waupaca to Plover on Sunday, September 9th. The event was sponsored by the Waupaca Historical Society and the Waupaca Old Car Club.



It was a fine early fall day, with a few fluffy white clouds and the temperature was in the low 70s. The cars gathered at noon around the City Square for an informal show, where folks had a relaxed time visiting with each other and viewing the very nicely restored vehicles. I gave a brief and very informal introduction to the history of the Yellowstone Trail and answered a few questions. There were about a dozen restored cars and one Model T truck from the 1920s to the 1950s. After an hour or so they proceeded to follow the thirty-some scenic and pleasant miles of the current drivable route of the original YT. I followed behind as we drove through Sheridan and Amherst to the Heritage Park in Plover. At the park, folks were free to visit the nicely restored old buildings on their own or along with the pleasant volunteer tour guide.

A highlight for me was the restored 1920s tourist cabin, relocated there from the YT at Stevens Point. I would be comfortable spending that night in the cabin enjoying the "antique" furniture...without TV or air-conditioning. I was also highly impressed with the tiny and recently restored travel trailer used for many years by the circus family who lived in the home re-located next to it in the Park. That home contains an amazing collection of the family's circus memorabilia and furniture. Don't miss it!

Continued



I would highly recommend visiting both Waupaca and Heritage Park if you are in the area. Special thanks to Mike Kirk, one of the organizers of the event who invited me to attend. He drove his beautifully restored Ford Model T wood-bodied Depot Hack (early station wagon) on the run.

New Wisconsin Guides

The new free Guide to Driving the Yellowstone Trail in Wisconsin has been distributed to many sites. I volunteered to deliver to the southern and eastern portions of the state, and that gave me the opportunity to visit with some of our great supporters when delivering them. That also gave me an excuse to again drive some of the YT route in that area, and I enjoyed a couple of very nice rides during those days in November. Get your copy now and start planning your summer road trip in Wisconsin. Find places which are distributing the Guide by visiting:

www.yellowstonetrail.org/FindTheWisYTGuide.pdf

To read the Guide online, go to: http://www.yellowstonetrail.org/ytw_guide.htm

Informational Meeting Planned for May

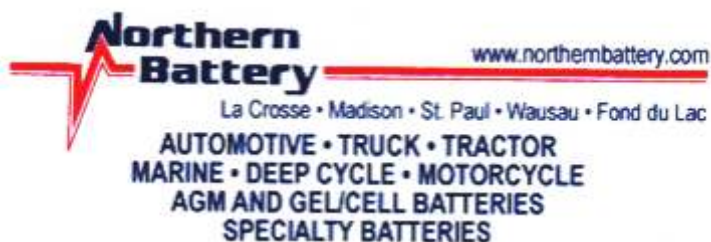
More for Wisconsin members: An informational meeting for area historical and tourism groups has been planned. It will be held at the Theresa Library on May 9th at 6:00 pm. Local Trailman John Battell has made the arrangements and will make a presentation on the YT history in Theresa. I will join him and present our YT video. We will answer all questions and encourage discussions of how best to promote their attractions along the YT to tourists traveling through the area.

Also, John Battell has prepared a great slide show which weaves the history of Theresa with its part of the Yellowstone Trail. A shortened PDF version of that show can be seen at www.yellowstonetrail.org/battell.pdf

New Corporate Sponsor

Welcome to Northern Battery, our newest corporate sponsor. They operate five commercial outlets in the mid-west and one them is the former Yellowstone Garage in North Fond du lac, Wisconsin. They had leased that facility for many years, but are now the proud new owners and have a very active interest in promoting the Garage building's history on the Yellowstone Trail. Some of you may know that my Dad, Jim Mowbray, owned and operated the Yellowstone Garage business from 1949 until 1966. I grew up in that historic building and have a lot of memories of those good old days.

I am sure Kirk and the crew will be good caretakers of the place and I wish them all the best success. The Yellowstone Trail Association sincerely thanks them for their generous donation to help support our efforts in documenting and promoting the YT.



Welcome New Trailmen!

I want to extend my personal welcome to John Battell of Theresa and Scott Peterson of Hudson, both in Wisconsin, as our new Trailmen in their respective areas.

John Battell is semi-retired, serves as an EMT, provides computer IT services for an area business, has two Ford Model Ts and is a member of the Theresa Historical Society. I have enjoyed working with John and look forward to great things happening along the YT in Dodge and Southern Fond du Lac Counties.

Scott Peterson will serve as Trailman for the Hudson to Menomonie area. He is retired from ownership of an automotive engine and transmission rebuilding machine shop. He drives a '61 Corvette and has logged many road trips, including US 50, 66, 12, 20, 30, 99 and US 1. I am sure that he will serve us well in the northwestern part of the state.

My 2012 Road Trip

This past year, 2012, I explored the "Evergreen State" of Washington, following the early southern route of the YT westward, and the later northern route on my return to Spokane.

My trip was 6,650 miles round trip and I spent 36 days on the road. Traveling to and from Washington from my home in Wisconsin is very enjoyable, as I wrote about last year. On this trip, I spent eight days driving to the Idaho / Washington state line, 28 days exploring Washington's wonders, and six hot and sometimes stormy days driving back to my home.

The rolling wheat fields of the eastern "Palouse", the arid areas in the west-central region, the Cascade Mountain Range, the Seattle area, and Puget Sound were all highlights of this leg of my trip. I experienced all kinds of weather and road conditions, which added to my experience.

I had a great time and I wandered at my own pace, stopping here and there when I wanted to. A big requirement of a "good" trip for me is NOT to have deadlines and commitments. I realize that not everyone is able to do it this way, but I suggest that you at least try to keep your plans flexible. Surprises...good and bad can alter your plans, so allow yourself free time to get the most out of your road trips, even if they are only for a day or a weekend. I firmly believe that "surprises" turn a routine trip into an adventure!

Due to space limitations, my trip blog is too large to be included in this *Arrow*. I feel that major editing loses the first impressions and continuity of my "on-the-fly" daily postings, so I have made available the first 15 days log for you to read by clicking here: [2012 TRIPLOG Day 1-15](https://dl.dropbox.com/u/4032786/2012%20ON%20THE%20TRAIL%20DAY%201%20-%202014.pdf) If you are reading a print copy of the *Arrow* copy/paste this link:

<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/4032786/2012%20ON%20THE%20TRAIL%20DAY%201%20-%202014.pdf>

Next time, I will give you a brief tour of the Seattle area, the Pacific coast, and the Columbia River Gorge. And, of course, I will include my entire trip log of my return trip on the YT.

Please feel free to contact me any time by e-mail at mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org or call, afternoons and evenings, please, at 608-436-3978.

Happy Trails, Mark Mowbray, Executive Director, Yellowstone Trail Association ▣



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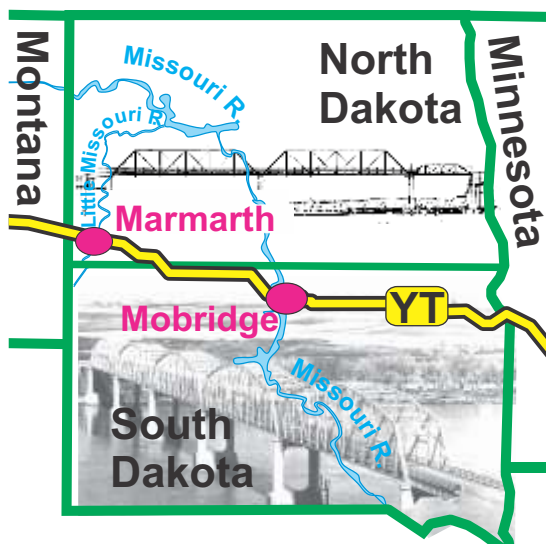
A TALE OF TWO BRIDGES - PART ONE

This article is adapted by Alice Ridge from her article in *American Road Magazine* Volume III Number 3. Part Two will appear in a later *Arrow*.

In 1912 dirt roads with their perpetual mud were keeping most newly minted automobilists very near home. Joe Parmley and his business associates had begun to do something about that mud. They had no government support, little money, and little experience.

Parmley formed the Yellowstone Trail Association (YTA) to identify the bits of existing roads, many just prairie wagon trails, that could be strung together as a route across the country. Association members were a persuasive lot and soon had local governments fixing up the roads. Culverts and small bridges were fairly cheap to build and a split-log drag was pretty effective at improving those dirt roads.

But then there were the rivers. How could the YTA get the tourist from the East to follow the trail only to be stopped dead by rivers with no practical way to get across? To trail associations, a successful route meant a connected route with no gaps in it to lose tourist interest or fidelity. There were two major gaps on their route, the closing of which tell a tale of grassroots effort. Here is part one of this tale - Marmarth, North Dakota. Part two, in the next *Arrow*, will tell the tale of the Mobridge, South Dakota, bridge across the Missouri River to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.



The Bridge at Marmarth

Marmarth, North Dakota, on the Little Missouri River, had become a major cattle shipping point as the plains were settled. Its population grew rapidly to about 800, but its development was hindered by a lack of a wagon or auto bridge.

In 1913, the Yellowstone Trail was pushing westward toward Montana, and came to Marmarth on the western edge of North Dakota. The lack of a bridge created a gap that threatened the integrity of the whole trail.

Streams had not stopped auto traffic much before. Forging was a way of life. But this Little Missouri River was different. It was described as "rampaging in spring, unpredictable, turbulent" and capable of rising several feet in moments.

Arthur Williams described the river of his youth to the author: "The water might be six inches or six feet deep. You could have a storm 35 miles upriver with all the streams draining into the river. In the morning it would be six inches. At night you couldn't get home."

There were tales of horses getting spooked while fording. Pete Stevens' horse threw him, hitting his head with a hoof. Pete floated down stream awhile before regaining consciousness. And then there was the crossing attempted on a raft. Twelve miles later it finally hit the bank.

In dry times an experienced driver could ford it easily; but a greenhorn could get stuck in the ever-shifting sands and have to be pulled out with a team. In high water a driver had three alternatives: he could camp and wait days for the water to recede; he could drive across on the Milwaukee Road railroad bridge ties and loosen everything on his auto and wait for replacement parts; or he could guts it across the ford and bet that he could best the strong current.

"Marmarth needs a bridge" was the chant in the western side of the city from early 1909 until its construction in 1916. A county bond issue was voted down in the autumn of 1912. It seems the "east enders" of the city were not buying the idea. Some disgusted Marmarthians took matters into their own hands: the local doctor corralled his friends and \$150, and in a weekend built a "low water" plank bridge just 12 inches above the low water level. It was designed to be "temporary" and it was. It floated away with the first high water.

The YTA weighed in to bridge this gap in the trail in early 1913 offering to raise \$10,000. They would do this by laying a special assessment on member towns in the area. By June 1913 only \$4000 had been raised. Newspapers along the trail in three western states carried frequent articles about the bridge crisis. Trail literature took up the cry. Trail members hosted "benefit balls" and "socials" to raise more money.

Rev. George Keniston, a charismatic Chatauqua speaker and popular minister, was dispatched in 1914 from the YTA to raise the rest of their promised \$10,000. He reportedly had raised \$28,000 in pledges in short order for this project and the road project through the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, just west of Mobridge, South Dakota.

Now here's the puzzle. In September, 1914, the YTA reneged on its promise. What happened? Were pledges not honored? "Doomed to failure" declared one reporter of the YTA offer. There was some grumbling in the *Marmarth Mail*, saying that the association "fluked out," but that was it. The project proceeded anyway. Bids were lower than expected, coming in at \$13,000. But there was only the \$5000 pledged from Billings County in the pot now since the YTA backed out.

Con't next page

Continued

In April 1915, a request for a referendum about the bridge was declined by the county board. All progress stopped. A ferry functioned for a brief period. It was a plank box with the ends sloping so that a car could drive down into it. It was fastened to a steel cable stretched across the river and was propelled by the current and by pulling on another rope tied to shore. When it dropped a car into the river the ferry fell into disfavor.

The large Billings County divided and the newly formed Slope County board passed a tax levy for the bridge. "East-enders" brought an injunction against the bridge that was soon dissolved, but a new injunction tied up the tax levy for a year. The Little Missouri River physically divided the town but the differences between the "west-enders" and the "east-enders" may also have been cultural. To the east lay flat farm land. To the west lay the "city" and the badlands. Apparently the eastern farmers saw no future in dealing with city folk nor need to cross the river.

But somehow, a steel and concrete bridge was built. On June 20, 1916, a big dedicatory celebration was held featuring a dance on the bridge, free barbecue dinner, electric lights everywhere and great hoopla. J.W. Parmley and J. Prindle, present and past presidents of the YTA, were featured speakers, so the \$10,000 debacle was apparently forgiven.

How dedicated, yet how foreign to us was this nickel-and-dime attempt to close the gap. Personal involvement can be seen at every step. The Commercial Club, the Yellowstone Trail Association members, the newspaper editor and county board members along the trail seemed to have directly participated in this grassroots effort. ▣



Bridge Dedication

Dance on the Bridge
And Free Barbecue

Marmarth, N. D.
Tuesday, June 20th

The Little Missouri River Bridge was Completed Wednesday June 14. The last bolt was placed and the last touch of paint duly applied; and Marmarth invites all the countryside to join with us on June 20th to celebrate the opening of this new Steel Bridge

A 1500 pound Steer will be roasted whole with the hide on, and served through the medium of 4000 Lugs. This is Marmarth's treat to our visitors and it is our most earnest desire that everyone in attendance be well served.

MARKING THE TRAIL IN NORTH DAKOTA

This is a first! Let's hear a drum roll! The good folks from Hettinger, North Dakota, have pulled off a coup! They petitioned their state representatives to officially recognize the whole of US hwy 12 in North Dakota as the Yellowstone Trail; that's about 90 miles of the Trail which would be permitted to be marked with Trail markers. Of course, local residents must provide the markers, but they would not experience the hassle that others have experienced in dealing with state and county road commissions.

The non-controversial bill passed the House by a vote of 90 to 4 in February. It passed the Senate Transportation Committee by a vote of 7 to 0. Backers of the bill anticipate success with the whole legislature when it reconvenes March 6, 1913.

Earleen Frieze of the Hettinger Area Chamber of Commerce, Francie Berg of Dakota Buttes Visitor's Council, and Bonnie Smith of Dakota Buttes Museum led the effort in attracting the attention of state House and Senate members. They started their campaign in 2012, the 100th anniversary of the Trail, and finally will achieve their goal in 2013. This shows you what you can accomplish by working together - even in a town with a population of less than 1300.

After providing a brief history of the Trail and the importance of this road 100 years ago, Earleen ended her letter to the state Senate Transportation Committee thus:

"Many people from across the US plan their vacations exploring a portion of the Yellowstone Trail; therefore I receive numerous inquiries each year wondering if anything special is planned along our portion of the Trail. . . . Official designation of the Yellowstone Trail would allow for signage along Highway 12 as it passes thru the very southwest corner of our state. Dakota Buttes Visitors Council has volunteered to purchase the signs as it passes thru Adams and Bowman counties.

I am asking for your support of a do-pass recommendation for HB1066. Thank you."

Francie followed with a map of the Trail and local data:

- At the organizational meeting held October 1912 in Lemmon, SD, three of the thirteen elected officers came from Hettinger, ND, 25 miles west.
- In Adams County much of the road was built on a festive Trail Day, May 22, 1914.
- Six original sandstone markers still stand within 13 miles of the North Dakota border.
- Dakota Buttes Visitors Council of Hettinger is willing to purchase Yellowstone Trail signs and work with the Dept. of Transportation to put them up on Highway 12 through Adams and Bowman Counties.

We request the Senate Committee give a do-pass recommendation for HB 1066. Thank you.

The YTA applauds these women in their dedication. ▣

A GIFT SUPPORTS A YT INTERPRETIVE SIGN

Mr. Alan Nuckolls, representative of the Evalyn O. Flory Foundation, has notified the Yellowstone Trail Association of the Foundation's desire to support the work of the YTA with a substantial donation. Mr. Nuckolls is aware of the Yellowstone Trail because he lives in Wenatchee, Washington, where the Trail traveled after 1925. From 1915 to 1925 the Trail ran south from Spokane to Walla Walla and thence west to Ellensburg. Additionally, Nuckolls' grandfather's farm was near the Trail in North Dakota.

Our By-Laws state, in part, that the YTA exists to further "public education, communication, and heritage tourism" along the Yellowstone Trail. Thus Mr. Nuckolls was consulted about his thoughts about a location for a lasting YT interpretative sign which would "educate and communicate information about the Trail to the tourist.

In keeping with that goal, Mr. Nuckolls and the officers of the Association decided to erect an interpretive sign on the Trail at the Douglas County Museum in Waterville, Washington. The site was chosen for several reasons: several pockets of interest in the Trail have emerged in the state of Washington, the site is both right on the YT (present US 2), and the museum site allows access by foot, and Amy Larsen of the nearby Waterville Hotel has been a friend of the Association and promoter of the Trail for many years.



Douglas County Museum Picture by M Mowbray

The interpretive sign would, no doubt, receive care from Amy and Lori Ludeman of the museum staff. The *Arrow* will keep readers apprised of the progress of this project.

The YTA thanks Alan Nuckolls and the Flory Foundation for its thoughtfulness in supporting this historic highway. ■

TRAIL-O-GRAMS

by Alice A. Ridge

The name Trail-O-Grams comes from the original Arrow newsletter published during the days of the original Yellowstone Trail Association. That was when THE method of sending quick short messages was the telegram!

1. Bryan Much saddled up one of his three motorcycles awhile ago and rode the 400 miles of the Trail across Wisconsin, taking startlingly clear pictures as he went. He comments at each picture, giving the reader bits of history and some "before and after" shots. What an interesting way to "arm chair" tour. These pictures may be seen at www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=563299.

2. Long-time YTA member, promoter and historian Lance Sorenson is ailing and would like to hear from you. He has moved temporarily from his home in Hector, Minnesota to Duke Hospitals, Durham, North Carolina where he is awaiting a lung transplant. He has been fighting Pulmonary Fibrosis since 2006, but YTA members wouldn't notice it because he remained actively writing and researching until recently. Look at the last *Arrow* and you will find his pictures about his demonstration he conducted for young people concerning life along the Trail 100 years ago. You can drop him a note and follow his progress at www.caringbridge.org/visit/lancesorenson1 Or you could send a note to him at 120 5th St. West, Box 792, Hector, MN, 55342 to be forwarded. Hey, Lance, come home soon so you can again drive those antique cars you love.



3. Remembering Ruth and Marge. Two YTA women passed away recently. **Ruth Kohlway** of Grafton, Wisconsin, has been a member since membership began, 2004. Over the years she made sure that her many friends knew of the Yellowstone Trail for she was always looking for more books and literature to share about it. We never met, but we spoke on the phone. She was delightful!

Marge Dietzler only joined the YTA recently at the invitation of member Dorothy Olson. Marge and Dorothy were friends in Montana and when Marge and her husband moved to Wisconsin, Dorothy came to visit them. We still recall that long and fun lunch with them! The YTA sends sympathy to their friends and family.

4. You've GOT to see this! Three sisters who grew up on the Yellowstone Trail (Old Highway 10) across the Yellowstone River from Miles City, Montana, have written a very readable book about their ranch life while the three were growing up. It is called **Montana Stirrups, Sage and Shenanigans** and consists of short tales told by the

TRAIL-O-GRAMS, CONTINUED

three. It has 260 photos in its 400 pages and captivating and humorous writing style (e.g. “Crouching low, I crawled toward a clump of sagebrush. Heart pounding, I raised up and peeked through the scraggly brush”). Francie Brink Berg Anne Brink Krickle, and Jeanie Brink Thiessen are teaching the reader history from horseback, from the kitchen and from the cattle drive. There will be a book signing in Miles City in April. This 2013 book is published by and can be purchased through Flying Diamond Books, 402 South 14th Street, Hettinger, ND 58639. \$29.95 plus P&H.

5. Recently the YTA heard from **two fledgling highway groups**: The Jefferson Highway Association and the Historic US Highway 20 Association.

The **Jefferson Highway Association** uses the subtitle “from Pine to Palm” as it runs from Manitoba, Canada to New Orleans, entirely west of the Mississippi. A group of interested folk formed the group in Missouri in March of 2011 to, among other things, “identify, preserve, interpret and improve access to the Jefferson Highway” and to “promote the Jefferson Highway as a tourism destination,” in addition, it “shall identify, preserve, interpret and improve access to the Jefferson Highway.” Like the present Yellowstone Trail, its route is a composite of many roads. Unfortunately, the YT only intersects the Jefferson in one spot, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Find them at www.jeffersonhighway.org

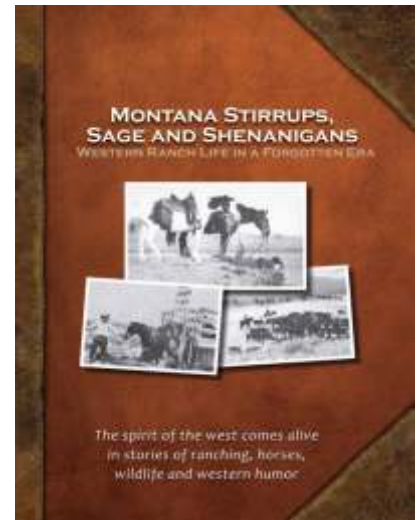
The newly formed **US Highway 20 Association** (not to be confused with Highway 20 Corridor Assn out of Iowa) was founded in 2012. This Association has some advantages over the YTA and our 100 year-old route. It bears a modern number and the over 3,000 mile route from Massachusetts to Oregon is already marked —hundreds of times. Installing historic markers and finding the paths of the route where it has been moved still will be a challenge.

When the US Highway numbers were assigned, US 20 incorporated many sections of the Yellowstone Trail in Massachusetts, on long sections in New York, on most parts in Pennsylvania, and long sections in Ohio.

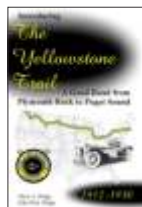
US 20 Association has similar goals to ours in that it is “dedicated to identifying & preserving the cultural importance of, promoting the economic development of cities, towns and communities along all 3,365 miles and former alignments of US Route 20 in 12 States, through education, events and promotions.” We both hope to “preserve” the route as a bit of important US history by increasing awareness and available information.

Find them at www.historicus20.com

It is good to hear from kindred souls who are interested in preserving the memory of a past culture and transportation era, and sharing that interest and knowledge with others. The YTA will work with these groups in any way that it can, perhaps through publishing articles of mutual interest in others’ newsletters. ■

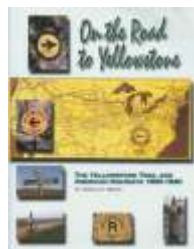


ORDER YT BOOKS & ITEMS FROM YT PUBLISHERS



Introducing the Yellowstone Trail

by Alice and John Ridge. \$ 5.95 each. **Shipping:** \$3.00 for any number. 96 pages. 16 maps. 45 illustrations. 5.5" x 8.5"

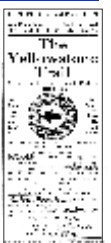


On the Road to Yellowstone

by Harold A. Meeks \$15.95. **Shipping** \$3.00 each. The content is very similar to the Ridges' *Introducing the Yellowstone Trail* but in a larger format with extensive pictures and graphics. It is well researched, very readable, and highly recommended.

1919 Yellowstone Trail Association Folder reproduction

Annotated. 32 pages with coast-to-coast map. 4.25" x 10.75". \$ 4.00 **Shipping:** \$1.00 for any number.



On the Yellowstone Trail

\$ 29.95 each. **Shipping:** \$3.00 per order of any number of these books. Reproduction of 1914 YT Assoc. publication. Minneapolis to Bozeman. 102 pp. Many 1914 ads. 11" x 8.5"

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