

WINTER  
2018

# THE ARROW

NUMBER  
40



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



## 1917 Oakland raises \$7,000+ with Trail Tour - Part 1

By John Gunnell, Iola, WI Photos by author

The Yellowstone Trail, which runs through 409 miles in Wisconsin, was recently used to help celebrate 100 years of Lions Clubs. Automotive author John Gunnell and Manawa Lions Club Member and mechanic Dave Sarna, drove the Wisconsin section of the historic trail eastward from Hudson to Waupaca and from there southward to Kenosha. The Oct. 9-14 trip, in Gunnell's 1917 Oakland car, to date has raised over \$7,000 for the Wisconsin Lions camp for blind and disabled kids in Rosholt.



Oakland at Yellowstone Garage in Waupaca

Gunnell purchased the 1917 Oakland car as one of his dream cars in 2015, after buying a building in Waupaca that was an Oakland dealership and a Yellowstone Garage. Sarna is a former automotive technology instructor at Fox Valley Technical College, a mechanic and friend. The two decided to tie the 100-year-old car with the 100-year anniversary of Lions Clubs International by driving the Yellowstone Trail through Wisconsin.

The journey started at the Hudson Arch in Lakefront Park at 9 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 9. Gunnell and Sarna traveled to Menominee, Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, Cadott, Stanley, Abbotsford, Marshfield, Plover, Waupaca, Oshkosh, North Fond du Lac, Hartford, Hales Corners and Kenosha. The finish line was at Gateway Classics in Kenosha the afternoon of Oct. 14.

Just prior to the trip Sarna and Gunnell overhauled the car's rod bearings and installed a clutch. Two East Coast men, Wayne Koffel of Pennsylvania and Andy Wise ([www.wiseandysgarage.com](http://www.wiseandysgarage.com)) specialize in Oakland parts and repairs and supplied parts by overnight mail to keep the car going. On the first day another rod bearing disintegrated and it was replaced during the mid-trip stop in Waupaca.

Many other people along the route helped the travelers and the Northern Battery Co. ([www.northernbattery.com](http://www.northernbattery.com)), which has a warehouse in the former Yellowstone Garage in North Fond du Lac, replaced the car's battery there. The trip was supported by radio station WPAK 106.9 FM in Waupaca, which broadcast Yellowstone Trail and Oakland historical information every 15 minutes for a week prior to the tour, during the tour and a week after the tour. During the trip, three other Oakland owners came out to see the car on the tour. Several weeks after the tour, Gunnell's car was put on display at the Wisconsin State Capitol during a Gala celebrating the historic building's own 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Yellowstone Trail Association was one of the sponsors of the tour.

### DAY 1 – PREPARATION AND TRAVEL TO HUDSON, WI

We left Ron Paige's auto repair shop in Manawa at around 4:15 towing the Yellowstone 1917 Oakland, which had just had a different (used) clutch installed at the last minute. The car seemed to be running hot on test, so we did a number of small things to try to rectify this, such as straightening radiator fins, removing an antique license plate that was right in front of the radiator, adding antifreeze to the coolant mix and painting the radiator.

We arrived in Hudson about 8:15. The car did OK on the trailer. The tow straps were a bit loose when we arrived. A vinyl or leather covering on the lower half of the front seat back had blown off on one side, but was still riveted to the other side. Otherwise only the plastic wrap protecting the hood and windshield loosened and blew around a little bit.

After a spaghetti dinner at Pizza Hut, John Gunnell hopped on the Internet to try to get advice on the cooling issues. First, he contacted Randy Rundle of Fifth Ave. Auto Parts in Clay Center, KS. Randy wrote a book on cooling systems and also helps people get their cars ready for The Great American Race. We left Randy a message. We contacted Andy Wise of Delaware and Wayne Koeffel of Pennsylvania, two Oakland experts, to see if they knew the part number for the proper fan belt for our 1917 Oakland Model 34. It was late and we did not get an immediate answer.

John recalled that the Gates Rubber Co. used to put out an antique auto fan belt catalog. He checked the Gates online catalog to see if they had belt listings for older cars and trucks and found out they do list a fan belt number for the 1919 Oakland Model 34B. Andy Wise said the two years take the same belt. He also gave us a NAPA number for a suitable fan belt. John also sent an email to Steve Rindt, of Eau Claire British Cars, to see if he could help us find a fan belt in Eau Claire, WI, if we get the part number. Now it's time to end a very interesting official first day.

## DAY 2 - MIRACLE ON THE HUDSON



Wisconsin's "Mile 0" of the Yellowstone Trail route

We made it to the arch in Hudson for the start of the Yellowstone Trail tour. Members of both the Lion's Club and the Yellowstone Trail Association showed up. There were around 20 people, plus a hot rod and a Chevy Advanced-Design pickup truck of the early '50s. Donuts, coffee and water were served. The Hudson police shooed some picture takers out of the roadway. Our first problem arose when the zipper on Dave Sarna's dress pants refused to operate properly and "came off the tracks." Dave changed clothes and took off on the Trail, with several traffic lights and hills greeting us before we left Hudson.

Finally we got out of town and had a pleasant



Oakland near Hudson on the Yellowstone Trail

ride along Highway 12. The sun was shining and it was a little chilly. Dave's GPS says he was going 22-23 mph. Great weather for not overheating and we had no problems in that regard. That was the good news. We had traffic backed up several times. About 25 miles down the road, Dave suddenly pulled over into a farm. The engine was knocking. It had just started and he stopped almost immediately. There was nothing to do but to load the car on the trailer.

town and had a pleasant



Oakland, with engine problem, on the trailer in Menomonie

With the car on the trailer, we continued on to Menomonie. Due to the breakdown, we got there late. There was a group of some 20 people including the Mayor and John and Alice Ridge of the Yellowstone Trail Association. No one seemed to mind that the car was on the trailer. They still wanted to have their photo taken with it and they still wanted to see under the hood.

After lunch, we took the car to a shop owned by a friend of John's. Steve Rindt runs Eau Claire British Classics. He let us work on the car near his shop, but had no empty bays to work on it inside. We removed the oil pan and could feel that several rods were loose. One was very loose, since the rod bearing had totally disintegrated.

We worked on the car until nearly 5, then loaded it on the trailer and took it to the designated stop at the Classic Garage, an old Texaco gas station turned into a restaurant by a Cadillac collector named Rick Payton.

Continued





Visiting the Classic Garage in Eau Claire

Dave unloaded the car for the local TV cameras and gave a good report on the trip. Afterwards, Rick Payton offered us the use of his shop in Chippewa Falls to start work on the Oakland. It was a cool place with 18 cars under restoration, most of which were '50s Cadillacs. We decided to stay in Chippewa Falls so we can put in a few hours disassembling the car again. The plan is to then load it up and keep moving until we get to Waupaca and put the replacement bearings in. We made some great new friends today, including a friendly farmer, a man who brought us a photo of his grandfather's 1918 Oakland and a Cadillac collector with a big passion for old cars. What more could you ask for?

### DAY 3 – “THAT’S OK” DAY!

We started the day at the Cobblestone Inn in Chippewa Falls. After breakfast we went back to Rick’s shop. The Oakland was on the trailer and Dave worked on it lying on his back. He pulled out another rod and bearing cap. This rod had gotten a little loose, but wasn’t destroyed like the No. 3 rod. Thankfully, the crank and journals look OK so far. While Dave was working on the car with Rick’s helper, John Gunnell re-organized everything in our F150 Crew Cab chase vehicle. Rick Payton had his machine shop clean the Oakland’s oil pan for us and gave us some supplies and a micrometer. Dave Sarna asked him what we owed him and he said, “Don’t worry about it; it’s OK.”

We were supposed to be in Cadott for lunch. Cadott is supposedly 15 miles from Chippewa Falls by highway, but we try to avoid highway speeds so we don’t hit wind that will rip the top off the car. We plugged in a random GPS address to get to Cadott by county roads and wound up driving to a rural address before we got to town “fashionably late”. Members of the Cadott Lions Club treated us like VIPs. We took the car off the trailer for a photo session with their plaster Lion in Riverside Park. After loading the car on the trailer again, we left Cadott and headed for our next stop in Stanley. About a dozen Lions Club members were waiting to greet us, along with one member’s 1939 Ford pickup. After a ceremony and photo session, the Stanley Lions gave us a check for the charity (the Lions Club’s camp for disabled kids in Rosholt). Then their leader took us to see the Stanley historical museum collection, which includes a 1906 Cadillac and historic photos of old automotive buildings that were in the town. Car clubs would be wise to put a trip to this museum on their schedule for next summer. We drove out of Stanley on an original section of the Yellowstone Trail and stopped to take photos of the old Yellowstone Garage in Stanley. As the owner of a Yellowstone Garage myself, I just had to get a picture of the Stanley building.



Cadott Lions Club members at Riverside Park

Our next stop was Abbotsford where we went to NMW (Northside Machine Works) and asked if they had some used rod nuts from a small-block Chevy (the same 3/8-in. size we needed), some assembly lube and some Plastigauge. We are trying to prepare what we can before we get to Waupaca. They had everything except the green Plastigauge. We asked Jeff at the shop what we owed him. “That’s OK,” was the answer again. After leaving the machine shop, we stopped at an Advance Auto Parts Store and got Plastigauge and shop rags. This time we had to part with \$9 and change. “That’s OK,” said Dave. At least we got it. It was just about our only expense for the day, other than fuel.

Continued

Our plan is to continue on to stops in Marshfield, Stevens Point and Plover with the car on the trailer, waiting for the bearings and other parts to come from Andy Wise of Andy's Garage in Ellendale, Del. Then we hope to redo the bottom end of the Oakland's engine at my Yellowstone Garage in Waupaca. Several other talented mechanics are going to be there to help. If all goes well, after lunch in Waupaca on Thursday, we'll have the Oakland going again under its own power. We'll follow it to Kenosha with an empty trailer that we hope to never use again (at least on this trip).

#### DAY 4 – MARSHFIELD TO THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL PUB

When we woke up it looked like it was going to rain. My 1917 Oakland has no side curtains (as well as no spare tire). So, we prayed for no rain as we continued on to Marshfield. Car collector Guy Carpenter, of Marshfield, called to tell us that he had arranged for us to use the two-post lift at the home of Al Breu, another area car collector. Dave Sarna wanted to get at least one or two more bearings re-inspected and properly adjusted so there would be less to do at my shop on Thursday. We left Al Breu's house at 11:30 and should have had plenty of time to get to the Sunrise Restaurant, except that we were delayed...(twice!) by a freight train with about 100 cars crossing the road. We finally got to the Sunrise Restaurant and met up with Lions Club members who crawled all over the car and took photos with it. Then, they treated us to lunch, which was very reasonably priced compared to other places. After lunch, we headed down the road towards our late afternoon stop in Plover. On the first part of this leg we traveled many beautiful country roads lined with trees wearing their fall colors. It was a shame to get back on I-39 just above Stevens Point. This highway soon took us to Plover.



Both Oakland Cars "resting" at the Comfort Inn's Yellowstone Trail Pub in Plover, WI

Our destination in Plover was the Comfort Inn, which has a "beverage center" called The Yellowstone Trail Pub. We unloaded the car from the trailer in front of the pub. This was the first stop where we had arrived early. Since there were no Lions Club members there yet, I decided to take photos of the car, by itself, in front of the pub. Dave also wanted to do a little more light mechanical work on the car, which he did right in front of the motel. Our first visitor was John Gehrke of Stevens Point, who owns the very original, unrestored

1928 Oakland All-American Six. We parked these two rare cars together, compared notes and took more photos. By this time other people showed up, including several Lions Club representatives.

As the October sun began to set, several of us retired to the Yellowstone Trail Pub to see a collection of Yellowstone Trail photos and memorabilia. Wayne Heiman of the Manawa Lions also came to see us. For several months, Wayne has been doing all the behind the scenes contact work to coordinate our stops at different places and he's done an absolutely great job. Our Yellowstone Trail Tour has been organized to raise money for the Lions Club's Camp for disabled children in Rosholt, WI. Visit "[Century For Sight](#)" on Facebook to learn more about the tour and how you can contribute to this Lions Club charity. Ψ

**NOTE: Part 2 of this report will be presented in the next Arrow, to be published in late May.**



## The Ridges Join the YT Tour from Menomonie to Eau Claire

By Alice Ridge

Oct. 9 was a bit nippy but about 20 Lions (in their gold organization vests), and John and I showed up at the “Off Broadway” plaza in Menomonie. We all agreed that this jaunt along Wisconsin’s portion of the Yellowstone Trail was a great promotional idea to publicize the Lions Camp for disabled children in Rosholt. While we waited for the hopeful chugging of a 1917 Oakland engine, John and I told the story of a 1913 Oakland 6-60 touring car which made a Yellowstone Trail pathfinding trip from Minnesota to the Yellowstone Park and back . . .2500 miles in 1913!



Lions Club members check out the car in Menomonie

Noon approached and apprehension rose as to the health of the 100-year-old Oakland. Cell phones soon told us that the Oakland had trouble east of Hudson, but was being trailered, staying faithful to the route. A whoop went up as the dark green beauty, emblazoned with Lions and Yellowstone Trail logos, was drawn into view. Then the inspections and questions began by the curious crowd.

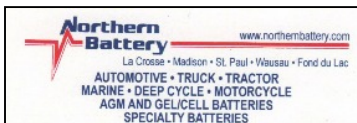
Next stop was Eau Claire. We led the group along the Trail (including an old-fashioned detour!) the 25 miles to the east side of Eau Claire to search out some repair help and then on to the Classic Garage restaurant, a brilliant choice for the

Oakland’s Eau Claire debut. The place is a renovated actual garage (old home of Pure Oil and Buck’s Classic Auto Repair) now owned by Cadillac collectors Rick Payton and Alex Karrer. When we ate there recently, we rubbed elbows with a pink 1950s Caddie near our table. Classic cars are rotated and displayed right inside the cafe.



Classic Garage in Eau Claire, WI

The Oakland soon appeared. Although it was again on the trailer drawn by the truck, it was backed off the trailer and displayed a bit of life as it purred for a moment to the pleasure of the waiting crowd. Then it was off to the east to be seen by Cadott, Stanley, Owen and Curtiss, all Trail towns bearing Yellowstone Trail markers. Ψ



**We would like to thank NORTHERN BATTERY for being a corporate sponsor of the Yellowstone Trail Association for the past five years.**

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Editor's note: This is the fourth of five articles tracing the emergence of the Yellowstone Trail through Adams County and Hettinger, ND, in an effort to increase awareness of this historical roadway and to focus on the important part that Hettinger and Adams County, ND, played in that effort.

## Promoting the Dream

You want to do this *WHEN?*

By Bonnie Smith, Hettinger, South Dakota

After **dreaming** of an automobile roadway from Minneapolis, MN, through southwestern North Dakota and on to Yellowstone National Park, and after **fulfilling the dream** of organizing community-wide Yellowstone Trail Associations (YTA) along the way to create the roadway, and after **marking the Trail** with various kinds of painted stones or embossed metal or painted signs, the parent association set about **promoting the dream** of the first transcontinental roadway along the northern states built without Federal funds.

At a time when roads were not marked, when few maps existed and when slippery mud was the usual road surface, the YTA provided a much-needed travel alternative. They had located a route, had encouraged towns and villages along the way to build roads on that route, and now, were about to produce maps and folders to guide travelers on that route. To further stimulate tourist travel, the Association set up tents along busy places on the Trail to distribute materials and provide weather conditions. Where possible, they encouraged travelers to telephone the Association ahead of time to learn what roads were most passable.



A list of garages, cafes and hotels along the route also came in handy for travelers. Some of those in our area were the Yellowstone Hotel, Hettinger, ND (below right); Odou & Arnold's Yellowstone Garage, Hettinger, ND (left); the Yellowstone Trail Garage, Bucyrus, ND.

Local store owners who did not formally name their businesses after the Yellowstone Trail, often included phrases in their advertisements such as "Special Attention Given to Tourist Trade" (Lemmon Auto Co); or "Tourist Work Especially Solicited" (Beaton Bros Gas Welding and Auto Repairing, Lemmon, SD); and Baker, MT's, Heinrich & Co Tourist Supplies, whose ad stated: "We cater to Yellowstone Trail Tourists."



Through believing in a dream, through carefully planning and organizing from 1912-1914, the move was on. The roadbed was built. The roadway was marked. Travel on the Trail was promoted and the Trail was enjoyed by locals and by travelers from miles away in either direction. Never again would travel across the far southwest corner of North Dakota be the same.

From 1914 to 1929, the YTA continued to hold regional and state meetings of the Association across areas included in the Trail. Then, in 1929, the stock market crashed. After the economic depression that followed, worsened by severe and extensive drought conditions, local merchants found it impossible to pay YTA dues. Area citizens, focused on survival, could no longer work on or maintain the road and the Yellowstone Trail Association, as first organized, ceased to exist.

Today, this roadway that opened the northern states to the rest of the nation encouraging transcontinental travel from coast to coast exists as US Highway 12. The former Yellowstone Trail Association has been rejuvenated by John and Alice Ridge of Altoona, WI, Yellowstone Trail Publishers, and dedicated volunteers.

### Sources:

*Adams County Records* archived at Dakota Buttes Museum - DBHS/M, 400 11th St S, Hettinger, ND.

*Hettinger ND Centennial: 100 Years of Change and Challenge.*- Hettinger Centennial Committee, 2007.

Peterson, O.T., ed. *On the Yellowstone Trail: First Year Book of the Twin Cities-Aberdeen-Yellowstone Park Trail Association*, 1914.

Yellowstone Trail Association: "YTA Then and Now." [www.yellowstonetrail.org](http://www.yellowstonetrail.org)



## One Couple's Adventures on the Yellowstone Trail – Part 2

By Bill von Tagen, Boise, ID

Editor's note: this is the second installment on Bill & Linda von Tagen's trek on The Yellowstone Trail last summer. The entire chronicle of their adventures can be found at: [www.afordonthelincoln.blogspot.com](http://www.afordonthelincoln.blogspot.com)

After driving through...and escaping...Chicago, we drove north towards Wisconsin in our Mustang, pulling our restored pop-up camping trailer. We stayed the night of July 6th in Winthrop Harbor, Illinois. In the morning we drove the few yards to Wisconsin and we stayed on the old Yellowstone Trail which is on the Sheridan Road along the shores of Lake Michigan. We drove north to Kenosha, Wisconsin where we met for breakfast with Mark Mowbray, the executive director of the Yellowstone Trail Association. It was great to finally meet Mark. I've talked with him several times by phone and he has always been very helpful. When he discovered that I had forgotten my magnetic door signs for the car, he loaned me his set.



Over a great breakfast, Mark enlightened Linda and me about the Yellowstone Trail through Wisconsin. He also provided us with some publications which are available in Wisconsin and which gave detailed information about the Trail in the state. This was a great help as I did not have nearly as much information concerning the Yellowstone Trail as for the Lincoln Highway. Despite meeting Mark for the first time, I felt like we were old friends.

After breakfast we made our farewells and then Linda and I continued north along the Yellowstone Trail on the shores of Lake Michigan, where we viewed some of the lakeside



Bill, left and Mark Transferring YT magnetic signs in Kenosha



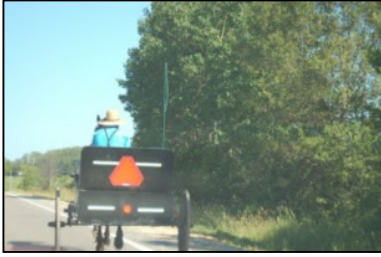
mansions in the Kenosha and Racine area, a major manufacturing center. Kenosha was an automobile town. Most recently, Chrysler had a plant here which they acquired along with American Motors who made Ramblers and other AMC vehicles. American Motors came about from a merger of Nash, Hudson, and Willys. Nash was once the Jeffery Motor Company. Now it is all gone. From Kenosha, we drove to Racine, Wisconsin. In Racine we looked at the statue (left) of President and Mrs. Lincoln. This is the only statue of Mary Todd Lincoln known to exist. She had visited Racine in 1867 to check out schools for son Tad. She must have made a good impression.

In Milwaukee we viewed the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Milwaukee is also known as the cream city, not for milk, but for all the white bricks used on the buildings. These bricks are a result of the clays which have a unique composition which resulted in a very good and unique creamy-white brick. They once were shipped from this region of Wisconsin all over the world. From Milwaukee we continued on the Yellowstone Trail to Fond du Lac and North Fond du Lac. In North Fond du Lac we visited the former Yellowstone Garage building where Mark Mowbray once worked alongside his father. From there we drove to Oshkosh, a town known for more than bib overalls and children's clothes. It was also a great dairy, lumber and wooden millwork town. Products from Oshkosh were shipped from the Great Lakes to points all over the United States. We now turned and headed northwest.

On July 8, we awoke in Marshfield after our third night in a motel. We have had some difficulty finding suitable campsites, and the weather does not always cooperate. Yesterday, for instance, we had planned to camp but at approximately 3 o'clock in the afternoon the heavens opened. We were heading west on the Yellowstone Trail through Wisconsin and had to slow to about 35 miles an hour because of the heavy rain. After seeing how wet the rain had made things we decided to get a motel room. The funny thing was when we arrived in Marshfield, not only had the rain stopped, but the sky was clear, and things were dried out.

Oh well, the motel bed was nice and soft.

Continued



We left Marshfield driving west towards Altoona, Wisconsin. Very soon, we found ourselves in the Dairyland that we had expected from the time we entered Wisconsin. The dairy farms were neat and orderly; we found ourselves back in Amish country. We slowed down several times for horse and buggies that shared the road with us (left).

When we reached Altoona, we spent a couple of pleasant hours with John and Alice Ridge. John is the president of the Yellowstone Trail Association. He and Alice devote

countless hours researching, mapping the Yellowstone Trail and providing detailed information both on the website and in response to any questions. The maps on the Yellowstone Trail website are second to none. They are both detailed and easy to follow. John and Alice just returned from a trip west to verify Yellowstone Trail alignments. Unfortunately, the records of the Yellowstone Trail are not complete when it comes to highway alignments. John has gone out into the field and used his knowledge of the trail and his field observations to provide more detailed records and maps. I marvel at the knowledge that both he and Alice have of the Yellowstone Trail and other old highways. I'm grateful for their hard work, determination and assistance. After we talked old highways, we had the opportunity to socialize a bit over coffee and Kringle <https://www.kringle.com/store>. After that great treat, we said goodbye to John and Alice and continued west on the Yellowstone Trail.



Alice and John with Kringle

We drove from Altoona to the Minnesota state line, and after we dodged the Minneapolis / St. Paul area, we stopped in the town of Olivia to take a look at the building that housed the bank owned by [Michael Dowling](#). One of the things that I enjoy about studying old highways is the personalities behind the highways. Dowling, although severely handicapped, went on to be a successful figure in Minnesota politics, he was a successful businessman and he "blazed the Yellowstone Trail" west to Yellowstone National Park and East to Plymouth Rock. We camped that night west of Olivia, and I can't help but think of Michael Dowling and what he accomplished and what he overcame.



One of many farms across the midwest

The next town we visited was Ortonville, Minnesota. Ortonville is the county seat for Big Stone County Minnesota. It is another Midwestern city that has been passed by the march of time. It appears that it was once prosperous. It still looks pretty good, but there are a few vacant storefronts on Main Street. The reason we traveled to Ortonville and went through the city is that I have an antique postcard of the Big Stone County Courthouse. The Courthouse was built in the first decade of the 20th century. Since it was only a block out of our way, I was curious to see if the courthouse was still standing and how it had weathered the passage of time. It was still standing proud and is being maintained by the county in good repair. Big Stone County, it seems, is mighty proud of its courthouse.

From Ortonville we immediately crossed into South Dakota. While we had seen some Yellowstone Trail signs in Minnesota and Wisconsin, we began to see more and more in South Dakota. South Dakota is the birthplace of the Yellowstone Trail, but more on that in the next Arrow. On our way to Ipswich we passed through the Prairie Pothole Country, a remnant of the last Ice Age. As the ice sheet receded, it left potholes. In the spring as the snow melts and with spring rains, these potholes fill with water. Some are so large and deep that they are also fed by springs and remain a standing body of water for the entire year. Most of the potholes dry up during the year. Farmers and cities have eliminated most of the potholes, but those that remain are now guarded as productive wetlands which are the breeding grounds for most of the waterfowl in this country. These Prairie Potholes proved to be an immense challenge to the railroad engineers and to the road builders of the early 20th century. The new-fangled automobiles got "stuck in the Mud".

**Note: The next installment will provide a focus on Ipswich, South Dakota, the birthplace of the Yellowstone Trail and will include a visit to the home and Land Office of Joe Parmley, the Father of the Yellowstone Trail. Ψ**




# The Evolution of the Automobile Heater is Credited to Women

By Curt Cunningham, YT Washington correspondent

In the early days of motoring most people stayed indoors and put their cars in storage for the winter. These early autos were not designed for bad weather driving. Cars back then were open to the elements with no heaters. Plus most roads back then were bad in summer and extremely bad or just plain impassible during the winter. Trying to drive a car with no heat, no top or windshield, driving on un-tended roads in miserable rain or a blizzard was why most people chose to store their car. There were newspaper articles that instructed you on how to best store your car in winter. Auto garages also advertised that they will store your whole car or just the battery for a nominal fee.

Cars in the early days were just very uncomfortable and not easy to operate. Winter made it that more unbearable. Staying warm was important as nobody wants to get frostbite while going to the grocery store and back. Keeping your toes warm was one of the first things motorists did to make winter driving less burdensome. One of the first ways to warm your toes was to place a heated brick inside of a box that was placed on the floorboard. This was a crude way to warm the toes but it helped. There needed to be a change to make these new fangled contraptions a little more comfortable. It wasn't the bad weather that prompted the auto manufacturers to make these changes. It was the women who helped speed up this process.



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Manufactured in Canada by Richard-Wilcox Canadian Co., Ltd., London, Ontario



On February 14, 1915, the Sunday Oregonian ran an article by John N. Willys, President of the Willys Overland Motor Co.

*"Much of the rapid evolution of the motor car from a one-lung-contraption of pain and sorrow to a smooth-running, luxurious vehicle can be attributed directly to feminine influence. Woman has demanded and has been accorded her place in motordom just as she has demanded and received practically everything else she wants.*

*Motorcar manufacturers who fail to heed feminine requirements have not made the success they otherwise might have achieved. In many cases it is the final decision of a man's wife, sister or sweetheart that settles the question of the car he is going to buy. Consequently it is only natural that we should consider the needs of woman in the design and construction of our cars. From a woman's standpoint a motor that requires laborious cranking by hand is a relic of barbarism. She dislikes puttering around with gas tanks and matches in order to turn on the lights and her aversion to the car that does not do away with these unpleasant tasks is more than a mere whim. An automobile without complete equipment is as inconvenient as a suit without buttons."*

Ironically the first car heater was invented in 1893 by a woman. Her name was Margaret Wilcox. Her design used an opening to the engine compartment that released hot air into the front seats of the car. This design proved less than adequate for temperature control. While the invention of a car heater proved to be of great value, this design never became popular or wide spread.

Continued

**Oldsmobile**  
GETS THE HONOR  
20TH YEAR

**OLDSMOBILE ALL-SEASON CARS**

**THE** new Oldsmobile All-Season Cars—Sedan and Coupe—combine many points of superiority in style and equipment. The bodies are designed and built especially for Oldsmobiles, and will not be found on any other car. They are built in and made part of the bodies—complete and permanent. They are entirely covered into open summer cars or closed winter cars by lowering or raising the glass windows.

New convenience is offered in the suggested position of the wide doors. The right or curb door opens to rear compartment. The left door is self-forward opening directly to driver's seat. The upholstery is of high quality material of pleasing appearance. The seats are broad and

comfortable—supported by Marshall Cushion Comfort springs. Front seats are of the individual chair type.

In the sedan the driver's seat is adjustable forward and back for either long or short reach. The deep lounge back seat has ample room for sleep. Each model is equipped with automatic car heater and foot warmer, electric door and dash lights and other accessories for modern and beauty.

Both sedan and coupe are built on the famous Oldsmobile Model 27 chassis, which meets in tire and fuel economy. 34-inch under-dash rear springs give exceptionally easy riding quality.

Sedan \$1650—Coupe \$1750—F.O.B. Flint, Lansing, Michigan

**OLDS MOTOR WORKS, LANSING, MICHIGAN**  
Nebraska Oldsmobile Company, Incorporated  
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In 1907 the first enclosed cars appeared. This helped to keep the elements at bay. To stay warm motorists used heavy clothing, rugs, gas lamps and burners as it had been done for centuries in the horse drawn carriages. Even though cars started to become better for bad weather, many still could not fathom driving a motorcar in the winter; roads were still bad and even worse in winter. An article from the Tulsa Daily in 1915 described winter motoring. "Motor in winter? Impossible, why, chilblains, rheumatism, frozen fingers, pleurisy and pneumonia would be the least a man would get, who attempted to motor for pleasure through the snows and bitter winds of our northern winter."

The auto revolution began to change the lifestyle of the day. While most still hunkered down in winter, there were many who did not. In 1915 the newspapers were talking about how fewer and fewer people were storing their cars during the winter months. People now were able to venture out into the cold in their cars. As more motorists began to do this, car buyers both male and female started demanding better comfort in vehicles for all year driving. In 1917 the Paige-Detroit Motor Car Co. advertised its line of closed cars to come equipped with an electrical gasoline heater. That year Oldsmobile also advertised a car with an "automatic car heater and

foot warmer". The auto industry began to change the design of some of their line towards the closed car type for year round driving comfort.

By 1919 the desire for a warm and comfortable ride had become very important. Newspapers began running articles about the trend moving toward car heaters. That year twenty automobile manufacturers began to install heaters in their closed cars. While the need for better roads and the need for warmth and comfort for driver and passenger were important, the auto itself needed some protection during the fall and winter months. Methanol was used as antifreeze in the early years but it rusts the insides of the engine. By the 1920's ethylene glycol was invented and available for autos. The Allen Auto Specialty Co ran an ad in 1919 for "The Shutter" radiator cover to protect your radiator from freezing. In 1921 Red Crown Gasoline advertised a "High Grade" winter gasoline. The ad said *"It burns clean and vaporizes to the last drop. That's why it gives such satisfactory mileage. At 21.4 cents a gallon why pay more?"*

In 1921 C. S. Pelton, vice-president and general manager of the Perfection Heater and Manufacturing Company in Cleveland, was in company with other factory representatives at the New York car show when he stated: *"There are twenty-eight different makes of cars equipped with heaters on the show floors," said Mr. Pelton. "The day of the heated car is here. In another year a car heater will be regarded in the same light as an electric starter a necessary part of standard equipment.*

The Sunday Star ran another article in 1923 that touted the benefits of winter motoring. *"How the automobile is helping make winter a season of pleasure instead of a trying ordeal is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of motordom in the opinion of Paul B. Lum, president of the Washington Automotive Trade Association.*

*Mr. Lum's opinion was expressed at a recent meeting of the local motor dealers' organization. "There is at present a great movement to convert winter into the season of rejuvenation, but few realize that the automobile is the keynote of the whole thing," Mr. Lum said. "Without 13,000,000 motorists to revolt against the idea of putting away their cars, the country would doubtless still be content to dig in for the winter in the good old-fashioned but highly useless way."*

By the 1930's the use of engine coolant circulated through heater cores began to replace the exhaust heaters. The automobile was fast becoming more comfortable and reliable. So to all of us modern folks, remember, when you switch on that heat, give a silent thank you to your mother...or grandmother. Ψ



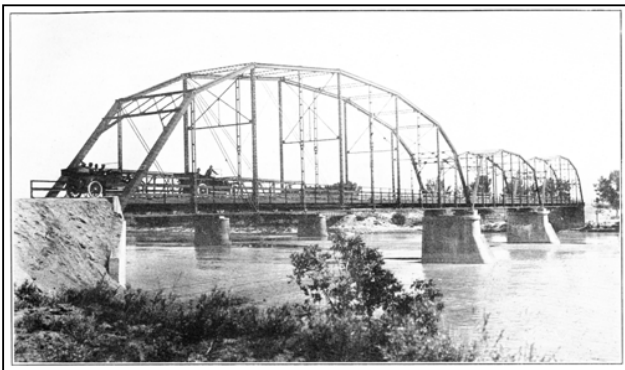
## **Tough going: Documenting the Route of the Yellowstone Trail in and near Terry, Montana** By John and Alice Ridge

The roads around Terry, and most other areas, developed through use, not construction. In the late 1800s and early 1900s wagons found paths to follow and left tracks in the prairie, generally used as “farm to market” roads. The roads that early autoists had for use in eastern Montana were those tracks. The state and federal governments had no involvement, but counties built a few bridges and had “county roads.” (*Official Road Map - Custer County Montana*, Compiled by H. E. Fernall, County Surveyor, 1912, Note: While this is a “road map,” it is a documentation of the county survey, certainly not a guide to autoists.) There were no auto tourists. Railroads, however, had burgeoned and provided long-distance travel for business and pleasure.

Then, in early summer, 1912, A. L. Westgard drove his big Pathfinder auto from New York to Seattle in his effort to “discover” drivable cross-country routes when there were no marked auto routes – or even any really usable roads. He claims to have had a fairly easy time of it until west of Medora, North Dakota. A real test for Westgard was crossing the bridgeless Powder River just west of Terry, followed by camping at a ranch near “the lonesome station” of Zero a bit northeast of Miles City. The following morning brought the realization that rising flood waters of the Yellowstone River had turned the ranch into an island for 16 days. The ranch was without adequate food, forcing them to eat prairie dogs. (A.L. Westgard, *Tales of a Pathfinder*, Published by A. L. Westgard, March 1920)

Westgard named his New York/Seattle route The Northwest Trail. His trip was sponsored by the AAA, but little attempt was made to make the route into a promoted named trail. The route did become known, later, in North Dakota, as the Red Trail, and some efforts were made to extend it west to the coast. The State of North Dakota recently prepared an interesting online video about its part of that route. In 1915, the entire Northwest Trail became part of the National Parks Highway as established as a competitor to the Yellowstone Trail by businessmen in Spokane, Washington. While successful, it never attracted the fame equal to the Yellowstone Trail. It did, however, more closely anticipate the routing of the modern Interstate System.

Also in 1912, J. W. Parmley, of Ipswich, South Dakota, mobilized fellow businessmen to establish a usable auto route first from Aberdeen to Mobridge, South Dakota. They soon extended their efforts to a route useable by autos from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Livingston, Montana, with a spur south to the Yellowstone National Park. It was named the “Yellowstone Trail.” Note that “trail” was then the term for a long distance route of any kind.



Bridge over the Powder River near Terry, Montana -1914

In 1913, Michael Dowling, of Minnesota, a successful man in many endeavors, a man who had lost both lower legs and much of one arm in a blizzard as a youth, drove his own auto and, accompanied by two others, drove the Trail to Livingston. The route of the Trail, established by men from South Dakota, was chosen by the criterion that it follow an established rail line. The idea was two-fold: first, the railroad went through towns (actually the railroad had founded many of the towns) and second, being close to a track meant that help for the autoist when needed would arrive with the next train! From Aberdeen through Terry that rail line was the Milwaukee Road. Existing market roads along the rail line were pieced together to

create the route. Of the several stretches that lacked usable roads along the rail line, the area between Ismay, Montana, and Miles City, Montana, motivated alert Terry businessmen to advise Dowling to travel south and west from Ismay, through Knowlton, over the existing Powder River bridge at Mizpah and then on to Miles City. They knew Dowling was just a bit early to use the bridge under construction over the Powder just west of Terry. For the 1914 season the Yellowstone Trail did follow the Milwaukee Road and used that new bridge. Local Ismay residents still, however, considered the road leaving Ismay to the southwest as being the Yellowstone Trail. In fact, that routing remained controversial to modern days. Eventually US 12 was routed near that path when interstate (US) routes were named in the late 1920s.

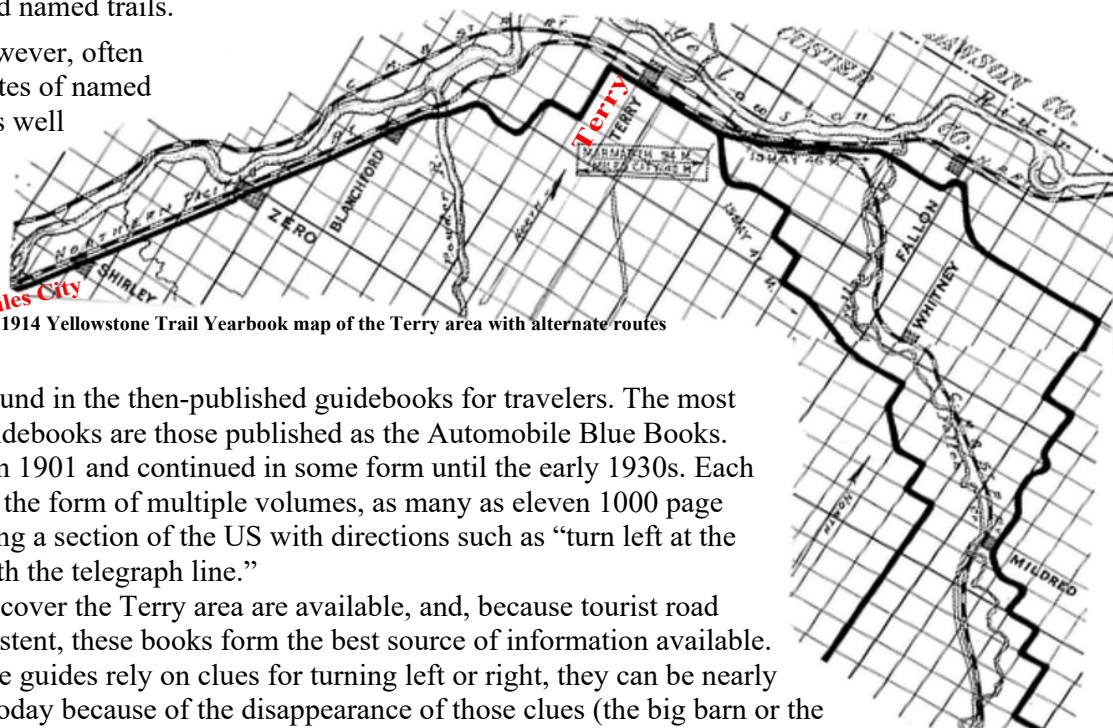
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A very early map of the route of the Yellowstone Trail in the area (from the 1914 Yearbook) shows a somewhat stylized route near Terry with alternate routes hoping that one of them could be found!

With little historic certainty to rely upon, the question today is “just what was the exact route of the Trail in eastern Montana?” In places it is hard to tell. Well, first of all, how was the detailed route established? As indicated above, the first determination was that the route of the YT follows the Milwaukee Road. This implies the assumption that a road of some sort existed along the tracks. Often there was a road and it became the YT. Other places had major problems, illustrated well by the Ismay/Terry/Miles City section. There had been, essentially, no auto traffic there. The “prairie trails” were unmarked and were constantly changed by washouts, land owner claims, and whatever, such as the county building of a bridge here rather than there. While the original government survey specified roadways along all section lines, the area terrain had many rough areas (with gullies) making many section lines impractical for roads. And many section lines were not needed as roads.

The detailed route was often left to local YT Association members to determine with the expectation that changes would be reported to the officers of the Association so that formal action could be taken at the next executive meeting. It is safe to assume that not all detailed route changes were carefully reported and acted on and recorded. In fact, it can be assumed that locals just moved the route markers, if they existed, or simply directed autoists as they judged best. It must be remembered that no government agency maintained records of the routes of the old named trails.

Auto clubs did, however, often record detailed routes of named trails. The AAA, as well as similar clubs, actively produced strip maps as tourism increased. The best source of detailed routing,



1914 Yellowstone Trail Yearbook map of the Terry area with alternate routes

however, can be found in the then-published guidebooks for travelers. The most available of the guidebooks are those published as the Automobile Blue Books. They were begun in 1901 and continued in some form until the early 1930s. Each year’s edition took the form of multiple volumes, as many as eleven 1000 page books, each covering a section of the US with directions such as “turn left at the 4-corners along with the telegraph line.”

Blue Books which cover the Terry area are available, and, because tourist road maps were non-existent, these books form the best source of information available. BUT, because those guides rely on clues for turning left or right, they can be nearly impossible to use today because of the disappearance of those clues (the big barn or the telegraph line) especially difficult for people not familiar with the territory.

To Ismay & Baker

We invite residents from the Terry area (just as in many other areas) to review copies of the contents of the Blue Books for 1916-1928 and trace out the route of the YT in the Terry area. It is a time-consuming, often frustrating task. But it can be rewarding! The use of Google maps or other digital maps, together with maps that report section lines is highly recommended. The mileages listed in the Blue Books can be applied to the maps, Google’s aerial views can find old unused roads and suggest impossible terrain for a road, and Google’s Street View can be an exciting tool, except that it is extremely limited in the Terry area. In addition, a local investigator might find helpful historic maps, documents, and pictures in the museum or local attics not available to those of us living elsewhere.

Contributions to the documenting of the Yellowstone Trail are appreciated.  
Send information and questions to [yta@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:yta@yellowstonetrail.org) Ψ