



# Culture Heritage Lesson #2: YELLOWSTONE IN TIME

**Overview:** This introduces youth to the different historical perspectives of concepts, events, and people that influenced Yellowstone National Park by conducting interviews and building a timeline of Yellowstone’s human history.

### Learner Outcomes

Youth will:

1. Know basic historical concepts, events, and people of YNP.
2. Know different historical perspectives of YNP.
3. Understand the historical significances of YNP.

### Getting Ready

**Materials:** Youth need journals and writing utensils; staff need handouts.

### Lesson at a Glance

#### **Historical Skits Interviews (30 minutes)**

This introduces some of the important groups in YNP’s history. Youth will interview one another while in character as cultural figures.

#### **Telling a Story through Time (20 minutes)**

A discussion focused on piecing together a timeline that focuses on the human history of YNP.

#### **Concluding the Lesson (10 minutes)**

This lesson ends with a discussion about the different historical perspectives throughout time.

Sheep Eaters acquired their name from the bighorn sheep whose migrations they followed. Bighorn sheep were a significant part of their diet, and they crafted the carcasses into a wide array of tools and implements. For example, they soaked sheep horn in hot springs to make them pliable for bows. They traded these bows along with other commodities to other tribes (Yellowstone National Park, 2013, p. 13-17).

### **Trappers and Prospectors – 1807 – 1860’s**

In the late 1700s, fur traders traveled the Yellowstone tributary, in search of Native Americans with whom to trade. They called the river by its French name, “Roche Jaune,” meaning Yellow Rock. As far as we know, pre-1800 travelers did not observe the hydrothermal activity in this area but they probably learned of these features from Native American acquaintances.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition bypassed Yellowstone. They had heard descriptions of the region, but did not explore the Yellowstone River beyond what is now Livingston, Montana. A member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, John Colter, left that group during its return journey to join trappers in the Yellowstone area. During his travels, Colter probably skirted the northwest shore of Yellowstone Lake and crossed the Yellowstone River near Tower Fall, where he noted the presence of “Hot Spring Brimstone.”

Not long after Colter’s explorations, the United States became embroiled in the War of 1812, which drew men and money away from exploration of the Yellowstone region. The demand for furs resumed after the war, and trappers returned to the Rocky Mountains in the 1820s. Among them was Daniel Potts whom published the first account of Yellowstone’s wonders as a letter in a Philadelphia newspaper.

Jim Bridger also explored Yellowstone during this time. Like many trappers, Bridger spun tall tales as a form of entertainment around the evening fire. His stories inspired future explorers to discover the truth. As quickly as it started, the trapper era ended. By the mid-1840s, beaver became scarce and fashions changed. In reaction, many trappers turned to guiding or other pursuits.

After the Civil War ended, informal European American exploration of Yellowstone began again. From 1863–1871, prospectors crisscrossed the Yellowstone Plateau every year and searched every crevice for gold and other precious minerals. Although gold was found nearby, no big strikes were made inside what is now YNP.



## Background

The following material is used in the suggested procedure and is necessary to instruct the lesson. Adapted from Yellowstone National Park, 2013, p. 13-27.

The human history of the Yellowstone region goes back more than 11,000 years. How long ago is still to be determined, but humans probably were not here when the entire area was covered by ice caps and glaciers. The last period of ice coverage ended 13,000–14,000 years ago, and sometime after that, humans arrived.

### **Native Americans – 10,000 years ago - present**

Tribal oral histories and archeological evidence indicate extensive use of the Yellowstone area by native peoples for thousands of years. Kiowa stories place their ancestors here from around 1400 to 1700 A.D. Ancestors to contemporary Blackfeet, Cayuse, Coeur d’Alene, Bannock, Nez Perce, Shoshone, and Umatilla, among others, traveled the park on established trails. They visited geysers, conducted ceremonies, hunted, gathered plants and minerals, and engaged in trade. The Shoshone say family groups came to Yellowstone to gather obsidian, which they used to field dress buffalo. Other tribes used the Fishing Bridge area as a rendezvous site.

The Crow occupied the country generally east of the park, and the Blackfeet occupied the country to the north. Shoshone, Bannock, and other tribes of the plateaus traversed the park annually to hunt on the plains. Other Shoshone groups hunted in open areas west and south of Yellowstone. In the early 1700s, some tribes in this region began to use horses. Historians believe the horse fundamentally changed lifestyles because tribes could now travel faster and farther to hunt bison and other animals.

Some Shoshones adapted to a mountain existence and chose not to travel by horse. These included the Sheep Eaters, or Tukudika, who used their dogs to transport food, hides, and other provisions. The Sheep Eaters were the only people to inhabit the higher mountain valleys found in Yellowstone and the surrounding areas during the winter.

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### **Explorers – 1869 - 1871**

Although Yellowstone had been thoroughly tracked by trappers, prospectors and tribes, in the view of the nation at large it was really “discovered” by formal expeditions. In 1869, three members of one would-be expedition set out on their own. David E. Folsom, Charles W. Cook, and William Peterson ignored the warning of a friend who said their journey was “the next thing to suicide” because of “Indian trouble” along the way. They observed Tower Falls, the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, continued past Mud Volcano to Yellowstone Lake, then south to West Thumb. From there, they visited Shoshone Lake and the geyser basins of the Firehole River. The expedition updated an earlier explorer’s map and refueled the excitement of scientists who decided to explore the truth of the party’s tales of “the beautiful places we had found fashioned by the practiced hand of nature, that man had not desecrated.”

In August 1870, a second expedition set out for Yellowstone led by Surveyor-General Henry D. Washburn, politician and businessman Nathaniel P. Langford, and attorney Cornelius Hedges. Lt. Gustavus C. Doane provided military escort from Fort Ellis (near present-day Bozeman, Montana). The explorers traveled to Tower Fall, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, and Yellowstone Lake, followed the lake’s eastern and southern shores, and explored the Lower, Midway, and Upper geyser basins (where they named Old Faithful). They climbed several peaks, descended into the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, and attempted measurements and analyses of several of the prominent natural features.

Ferdinand V. Hayden, head of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, led the next scientific expedition in 1871, simultaneous with a survey by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Hayden Survey brought back scientific corroboration of the earlier tales of thermal activity. The expedition gave the world an improved map of Yellowstone and visual proof of the area’s unique curiosities through the photographs of William Henry Jackson and the art of Henry W. Elliot and Thomas Moran. The expedition’s reports excited the scientific community and aroused even more national interest in Yellowstone (Yellowstone National Park, 2013, p. 18-27).

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## Park Protectors – 1877 - Present

When Yellowstone was established on March 1, 1872, Congress appointed a Superintendent named Nathaniel Langford but they didn't give him a salary or provide him with any help. The second Superintendent, Philetus Norris, received funding from Congress to build roads and erect a park headquarters. Eventually "Assistant Superintendents" were hired to patrol the park, but the system did not work well. The park was too big to protect with a small group of assistants and they struggled with corruption and other inefficiencies. By 1886, Congress declared that it was unwilling to provide additional money towards the failing system of civilian protectors of Yellowstone. The world's first national park almost failed. Fortunately, the U.S. Army was able to step in and help. In the late summer of 1886, a troop of Cavalry soldiers arrived in Yellowstone to assume the responsibility of protecting the park (Haines, 1965, p. 123).

Over the next 32 years, soldiers performed many essential duties. These duties included arresting poachers, assisting visitors, stopping vandalism of the thermal features, patrolling on horseback and skis, gathering information on the park, and fighting forest fires. By 1916 there were enough national parks and monuments to justify a new government agency to manage and protect them all. This new agency was the National Park Service and the task of managing the parks fell to National Park Service Rangers. When the Army left Yellowstone in 1918, it passed down to the Rangers strong procedures and traditions for providing a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors while also preserving the park.

At first Rangers had a wide range of duties; in the afternoon they could be capturing a rogue bear, and in the evening they would have to give a campfire talk. As time passed, those duties grew more specialized and separate jobs were created for law enforcement, interpretation, and other general duties. Today, there are jobs in the National Park Service as varied as carpenters, historical preservationists, scientists, administrative assistants, archivists, and many more. In one way or another they are all working toward the National Park Service mission: "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (The national Park Service Organic Act, 1916).



## Telling a Story through Time (20 minutes)

1. Present the dates and timeline events before instructing them to work as a group to put things in chronological order.
2. Review the order using the answer key in the staff notes. Do not just move through this activity and give them the correct answers, have them think hard about the events. Assist them by asking why they chose to put events in the order they did. Help them solve the event timeline, using reason, until they have it correct.
3. Have them present the timeline to the staff once they have it in the correct order..
4. Ask: If you could go back to any event on the timeline, which would it be and why??

Concluded: (10 minutes) Discuss the different historical perspectives throughout time. **(S1)** Ask the following questions:

- a. How do any of the events in the past influence events in the future?
- b. In what ways have other cultures contributed to Yellowstone's cultural heritage?
- c. What events in Yellowstone's history do you think are celebrated and which ones are not?

### Assessment Check Ins:

**(F1):** Provide insight into how youth implement their understanding of their historical character by being interviewed as that character.

**(S1):** Assesses the understanding of the cultural figures within the timeline, confronting any misconceptions of who and when.

**(S2):** Assesses learning by discussing the influences of Yellowstone's past on current events of today.

### Staff Notes:

The following material is from contributing author YNP Ranger Matt Ohlen, M.A.

- Historical Skits Interviews: If youth are not monitored closely, this activity can become too distracting and limit the learning that is occurring.



## Suggested Procedure

### **Historical Skits Interviews (30 minutes)**

Staff will:

1. Introduce the important visitors of YNP's past.
2. Explain that they will be traveling back in time to interview historical figures of YNP.
3. Have them review the cards and prepare to be in character (there are 7 character cards in the handouts).
4. Instruct them to brainstorm a list of questions that they would like to ask the other historical figures in the group. Give examples such as:
  - a. What is your name?
  - b. When did you come to Yellowstone National Park?
  - c. What did you do here?
  - d. What are your interests?
  - e. Where did you come from?
5. Youth then get into character by becoming their cultural figure on the card that was passed out to them. Emphasize staying in character and being appropriate. **(F1)**
6. Have them pair up within their groups and rotate the role of interviewer and interviewee. After a few minutes, have them switch partners until they have interviewed everyone in the group. **(F1)** Sometimes they can get carried away and the staff will need to remind them to stay in character. If the staff would like to get involved with them, there are extra characters to do so.
7. Next, challenge youth to line up in chronological order to when their characters visited Yellowstone. **(S1)** Correct any with the answer key in the staff notes.
8. Transition: Explain that next they will be making a timeline that focuses on the Human History of YNP.

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### Historical Skits Interviews: Answer Key

John Colter - 1807

Jim Bridger - 1832

Osborne Russell - 1835

Nathaniel P. Langford – 1870 – same expedition as Truman Everts

Truman Everts - 1870

Sheep Eater Native & Shoshone Native –both gone by 1871 though they may have occasionally come into the park to hunt after that.

Ferdinand V. Hayden - 1871

Captain George Anderson - 1891

Ranger Horace Albright – 1919

- Telling a Story through Time: Answer Key

13,000 – 14,000 year ago – Yellowstone glaciers melt, park is mostly ice free.

11,000 years ago – People begin visiting Yellowstone area

Late 1700's – Regional tribes acquired horses.

1804-1806 – Lewis and Clark expedition - passes within 50 miles

1807-1808 – John Colter explores part of Yellowstone

1820's – 1840's – Rocky Mtn. Fur Trapping Era – some trappers visit Yellowstone

1860's – Prospectors crisscross Yellowstone looking for precious metals

1869-1871 – Formal expeditions explore Yellowstone

1872 – Yellowstone becomes the world's first national park

1886 – Army arrives to protect Yellowstone

1916 – National Park Service created

("Yellowstone Resources and Issues Handbook: 2012", 2012, p. 19-24).

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#### Handouts:

- Background on Historical Figures
- Telling a Story Through Time

### **Background on Historical Figures**

The following material is from contributing author Matt Ohlen, M.A.

#### **Sheep Eater Native**

We call ourselves the *Tukudika*, for the big horn sheep we hunt. We use them for the food and tools we need in our daily lives. Because we follow the big horn sheep migrations through the high mountains and valleys, we are the only people to live year-round in the area that became Yellowstone National Park. Other tribes and mountain men think we are poor because we choose to use dogs to haul our gear instead of horses. We are certainly not poor; dogs make more sense in the steep mountains. We make one item that all other tribes want; a horn bow made from a big horn sheep ram. Soaking the horns in the hot springs of Yellowstone makes them soft enough to cut and bend. At the end of a long day of hunting or traveling, I look forward to relaxing in my small cone-shaped wikiup with the other members of my family group (Dominick, 1964).

#### **Shoshone Native**

I was born into the *Kutsundeka*, or Buffalo Eaters of the Shoshone tribe. My wife is a member of the Agaideka, or SalmonEaters, however, and I have learned to love her since I joined her family group. Like many of the Shoshone, we acquired horses in the mid-1700s. What a difference they made! We ride on the Bannock Trail, which wound its way from our homeland in Idaho through the high-country of Yellowstone to the buffalo hunting grounds on the plains. On one journey, I met my Shoshone cousins who lived year-round in the chilly mountains. Like all other peoples throughout the Yellowstone Region, except those rugged Sheep Eaters, my fellow Shoshone prefer to visit Yellowstone in the summer. We gather plants, hunt, quarry obsidian, trade, conduct ceremonies, and visit the hot springs and geysers. With many tribes visiting Yellowstone during the summer it is not uncommon for our camp to be raided by the Blackfoot tribe's war parties. Even with this risk, it is still worth it to visit and travel through Yellowstone (Ojibwa, 2010; Yellowstone National Park, 2013; Schullery, Stevenson, 2004).

#### **Jim Bridger**

I've been out west trapping beaver for so long that the snow-capped mountains were just anthills when I arrived. Or at least that's what I like to tell those young tenderfeet. My name is Jim Bridger or, to some, "Old Gabe." When I trapped my way through the Yellowstone area starting in 1832, I experienced some amazing things. There was a forest with petrified birds sitting in petrified trees singing petrified songs. There was a mountain made of clear obsidian that acted as a giant magnifying glass, allowing me to see 25 miles away. There was a lake that had patches of water that were boiling hot; when I went fishing there, I never had to cook what I caught because the hot water did it for me! You can't blame me if I exaggerate my stories a little bit since people didn't believe me when I told the truth. I guess the wonders of Yellowstone are just too amazing to believe until you experience it for yourself. And, like I always say, don't "spoil a good story just for the sake of the truth!" Well, the truth is that with the geysers, petrified trees, and cliffs of obsidian, Yellowstone is incredible. In fact, the tall tales that the other trappers and I told helped to get the word out about the thermal features of Yellowstone. And those thermal features are why Yellowstone was made a national park (Zimmerman n.d.; Yellowstone National Park, 2013)

#### **Osborne Russell**

If anyone was ever to describe my strengths, I think they would say I have a good eye for detail. My name is Osborne Russell and this trait served me well my entire life, from my days of fur trapping to

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my days as a judge in Oregon. I never agreed with those mountain men who tell tales so tall that there is hardly any truth left in them. I want to tell it like it is, the truth is incredible enough, especially in Yellowstone. I kept a meticulous journal all through my fur trapping days in the 1830s and '40s. In fact, I was one of the few trappers who could read and write. I wrote about all my daily activities; adventures with Native Americans, close calls with bears or ordinary chores like hunting, cooking, and traveling. I visited the Yellowstone area five times, starting in 1835. I feel lucky to have seen the Yellowstone region when I did, because by the time I left, the wildlife had been reduced and I felt "it is time for the white man to leave the mountains." But from my journal you could learn all about the ways of trappers, how the different Native American tribes lived, and what it was like seeing Yellowstone before many white people had ever set foot there (Osborne Russell, ed. Aubrey Haines, 1965 pg. 123; Yellowstone National Park, 2013).

### **John Colter**

My years trapping and exploring the Rocky Mountains in and around Yellowstone were filled with one death-defying adventure after another. Maybe this was because I was the first white man to travel through the Yellowstone area. My name is John Colter. I was part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 and by the end of the trip I was hungering to explore the areas we didn't see. I was sent by the fur trapping company I joined to travel through the Yellowstone area in the winter or 1807-08 to alert the tribes of my presence in the mountains and my desire to trade with them for furs. It was then that I saw many of the incredible sights of Yellowstone and brought back the first stories. Many people didn't believe me about the thermal features in the region and they called one thermal area "Colter's Hell" as a way to make fun of my incredible tales. My trapping partners and I were attacked three times by the Blackfoot tribe. The first time, they killed my partner, stripped me naked, and gave me a head start. Then the warriors took after me. It was a human hunt, and I was the prey. Luckily, I'm a fast runner and I outran all but one of the Blackfoot warriors. I killed him with his own spear, and then hid under a pile of driftwood in a river while the other warriors looked for me. Eleven days and 200 miles later, I stumbled back to my company's fur trading fort, naked, cold, and hungry, but glad to be alive! (Shelly, n.d.; Zimmerman, n.d.; John Colter, n.d.; Yellowstone National Park, 2013).

### **Nathaniel P. Langford**

Looking back on my life, I never would have guessed that my career in banking would lead to adventures out west in Yellowstone. My name is Nathaniel P. Langford and I became the first Superintendent of the brand new Yellowstone National Park. When I lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, working as a banker, I signed on for a trip to the gold fields of Idaho. I eventually found my way to gold strikes in Montana and was soon appointed to a position in the new territorial government. I became well known in Montana Territory and was lucky enough to join the Washburn Expedition of 1870. While on the Washburn Expedition, my fellow explorers and I named Old Faithful, visited the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone and measured its waterfalls, and gazed upon the beauty of Lake Yellowstone. After the expedition was over, I traveled through the eastern United States giving lectures on the wonders of Yellowstone and trying to convince people to create a national park. My efforts, and those of others, were successful and a new park was created! I was appointed the first Superintendent of Yellowstone, but there was no pay and I lived far away from the park. I did visit it three times during my five years as Superintendent, and am happy to say that I evicted one settler who claimed that he owned the Boiling River (Haines, 1996; Yellowstone National Park, 2013).

### **Ferdinand V. Hayden**

When I found my first fossil in the Badlands of Dakota Territory, I knew that geology was what I wanted to spend my life studying. I returned to my original training to serve as a surgeon in the Civil



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War, but soon after I was back working as a geologist. Once word of the 1870 Washburn Expedition's amazing finds in Yellowstone reached my ears, I was determined to lead my own expedition there the next year. With my position as leader of the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories, I was able to get money from Congress to lead the Hayden Survey of Yellowstone – named after me, Ferdinand V. Hayden. My survey, also called the Hayden Expedition, was the first to be officially sent by the U.S. government and was the first to scientifically study the geology of Yellowstone. On the expedition there was the photographer William Henry Jackson and the artist Thomas Moran. They took the first photographs and painted the first pictures of Yellowstone that anyone had ever seen! Their art work and my tireless efforts to convince Congress and the President to make a national park at Yellowstone succeeded only a few months after my expedition ended. On March 1, of 1872, Yellowstone became the world's first national park! (John Wesley Powell, "Ferdinand V. Hayden," n.d.; Yellowstone National Park, 2013; Haines, 1996, pg. 438-439).

### **Truman Everts**

When I joined the Washburn Expedition in 1870, I was looking for an adventurous vacation since I was recently out of work and had not yet found new employment. What better way would there be to spend a month or two of time than to help explore the rumored wonders of the Yellowstone? Because of my trip with the Washburn Expedition, I didn't have to look for work after my return because I almost didn't return at all! My name is Truman Everts and I hold the record for being lost the longest in Yellowstone and still making it out alive – 37 days! A year after my rescue I wrote the story of my amazing survival, called "Thirty-Seven Days of Peril" for the *Scribner's Monthly* magazine. The story came out just as members of the Washburn and Hayden Expeditions were making their case for the creation of a national park at Yellowstone. My article helped to get more attention to Yellowstone and its amazing features, many of which almost killed me. I was burned by thermal features, harassed by wildlife, and made to struggle through winter weather. By the time I was rescued, I was less than one hundred pounds and had gaping wounds on my legs and feet that went to the bone. I was on death's doorstep. But here I am, many years later, happy, healthy, and employed (Everts, 1871; Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment-Biographical Appendix: F-L, 2000).

### **Captain George Anderson**

When I was appointed Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park in January of 1891, I knew I would be facing a new and exciting challenge. Luckily, my experiences in the U.S. Army prepared me well for my new job. I learned how to survey and build roads, how to deal with rough and tumble frontiersmen, how to adapt to new situations, and how to act like a gentlemen among the social elite of Europe. All of these skills served me well as the commanding officer of Yellowstone. My efforts and those of the soldiers under my command fixed the poor road conditions, greatly reduced the numbers of poachers, and helped secure the first federal law to provide punishments for harming Yellowstone's wildlife. That last accomplishment was perhaps the most proud moment of my career. Following my orders, a few soldiers captured Yellowstone's most notorious poacher, Ed Howell. Unfortunately there were no laws under which to punish Howell. The news of his lack of punishment made many of my powerful acquaintances in Congress angry and they quickly passed a law called the Lacey Act. This law was the first ever national law to protect wildlife! Because of my hard work, energy, and success I was known by the nickname "Czar of Yellowstone" by the time I left in 1897 (Haines, 1996; Yellowstone National Park, 2013).

### **Ranger Horace Albright**

Perhaps one of the most fortunate moments of my life was when I became the personal assistant to Stephan T. Mather, who was to eventually become the first Director of the National Park Service. My association with him set me on the path to becoming the second Director of the National Park

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Service. But this did not happen until I had spent many years as the first National Park Service Superintendent of Yellowstone. When I became Mather's assistant, there was no such thing as the National Park Service. Many of the national parks were managed by the Army and others by different government agencies. With my help, Mather convinced Congress and the President in 1916 to create a new agency, called the National Park Service, to oversee all the national parks and monuments. Once this was achieved, Mather appointed me the first official Superintendent of the country's most prestigious and oldest park – Yellowstone. I held this position from 1919 until 1929. While Superintendent of Yellowstone, I faced the enormous challenge of coping with the approval of automobiles in the park that happened in 1915. With the automobile came a massive increase in numbers of visitors. I accommodated them by improving roads, building campgrounds, inspiring companies to build new facilities such as gas stations, hotels and restaurants. Additionally, I started the practice of interpretive Ranger talks. When my term ended, I left behind an approach for protecting and enjoying national parks that Rangers have continued to use (Haines, 1996; Yellowstone National Park, 2013).

### Telling a Story Through Time

The following material is from contributing author Matt Ohlen, M.A.

#### **Detail for the back and front of the card plus the hint/connection to broader U.S. history in parentheses.**

- 13,000-14,000 years ago – (often called the “Ice Age”) – This glacial period was known as the Pinedale glaciation. At its peak, Yellowstone was covered with roughly 4,000 feet of ice. Ice also covered most of what is now known as Canada and parts of the northern continental United States.
- 11,000 years ago – (Clovis culture) – A Clovis point (a specific style of projectile point) was found and determined to be made out of obsidian from Obsidian Cliff in what is now Yellowstone. This proves people visited the Yellowstone area to obtain the obsidian.
- Late 1700's – (around the time of the American Revolution) – The acquisition of horses brings major changes to many tribes' way of life. With increased mobility, tribes begin to re-align their territories. This process resulted in the territories and cultures that were encountered by the first white people to visit the Yellowstone region.
- 1804-1806 – (Thomas Jefferson is the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the U.S.) – Lewis and Clark lead an expedition to explore the vast western reaches of the continent. Though they never visited Yellowstone, some members of the expedition passed within 50 miles near modern-day Livingston, MT. Expedition members heard stories of Yellowstone from Native Americans they met during their travels.
- 1807-1808 – (Robert Fulton starts first commercial steamboat service on the Hudson River) – John Colter had asked and received permission to leave the Lewis and Clark Expedition early in order to return to the Rocky Mountains and establish trapping partnerships with Native Americans. He set off in the winter of 1807-08 and became the first white person to see some of the wonders of Yellowstone.
- 1820's-1840's – (U.S. starts to re-locate Eastern tribes to land west of the Mississippi. The nation debates slavery) – Trappers travel throughout the Rocky Mountains, including Yellowstone, trapping beaver for their pelts to make hats. Beavers are trapped out of many areas by the 1840's when, coincidentally, styles change and the beaver felt hat is no longer popular. Trappers brought back strange tales of amazing things they had seen in Yellowstone.
- 1860's – (Civil War and Reconstruction) – In 1862 gold was discovered northeast of the area that would become Yellowstone. Prospectors searched the entire Yellowstone area for gold but found none within current park boundaries.

## Yellowstone YCC REC

- 1869-1871 – (Ulysses S. Grant becomes President. The Transcontinental Railroad was completed) – Some amazing stories and rumors about the wonders of Yellowstone had been told by trappers and prospectors that people started to believe they may be true. Some of these people formed the first expeditions to Yellowstone with the sole purpose of exploration. These expeditions were credited with discovering Yellowstone, even though people had been there for thousands of years. Proof of the amazing thermal features was brought back to civilization and the effort to make Yellowstone a national park was started.
- 1872 – (Reconstruction of the South continues, Freedmen’s Bureau abolished) – Through the efforts of expedition members and Congress, enough support is gained to make Yellowstone the world’s first national park. Yellowstone’s mission, as put into law by Congress, is to be a “public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” but also to “provide for the preservation, from injury or spoliation, of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park, and their retention in their natural condition” (Yellowstone Organic Act).
- 1886 – (Industrial Revolution continues) – By 1886 Congress was no longer willing to provide funds for the management of Yellowstone because of the poor performance and corruption of some early park managers. The Secretary of the Interior, who was ultimately in charge of Yellowstone’s management, asked the Secretary of War for help. As a result, the U.S. Army was sent in to take charge of Yellowstone.
- 1916 – (World War I is raging in Europe. The U.S. enters the war in 1917.) – By 1916, the Department of the Interior managed 14 national parks and 21 national monuments. It was becoming clear that a new agency within the Department of the Interior was needed to more cohesively manage all the national parks and monuments. To assume control of all these public lands, the National Park Service was created.