Yellowstone Science

A quarterly publication devoted to the natural and cultural resources

Celebrating the Roosevelt Arch

A Centennial History of an American Icon

Window Into Gardiner

Volume 11 Number 3

A Monumental Idea

"The entrance to the Park gives one the impression of space—breadth, height and vastness. And the imagination fancies Nature in the personification of a mother standing with open arms to welcome her children home. It is home to the freedom-loving soul, and one wishes that no others save those who love Nature in all her moods, might ever pass through the massive stone archway marking the entrance to the Nation's fairyland, 'For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People,' —for so is the Park dedicated."

—from the journal of visitor Dorothy Brown Pardo, 1911

COURTESY SUSAN AND JACK DAVIS

Societies build monuments to celebrate greatness. Some pay tribute to great men and women of history, such as the presidents carved in stone at Mount Rushmore or the yet-unfinished likeness of Crazy Horse nearby. Other monuments glorify great achievements or events of the time, such as Paris's Arc d'Triomphe proclaiming victory at war. Still others memorialize those who gave their lives in such conflicts, like the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In Yellowstone, the stately stone structure that stands at the park's North Entrance celebrates an idea. A good idea. A great idea. A monumental idea. The world's first national park has come to represent a great societal act of foresight and altruism, preserving for all of time our first best place. That is why, when I approach the stop sign at U.S. Highway 89 and Gardiner's Park Street, I still find myself, most often, turning sentimentally right. I choose to drive through the Roosevelt Arch, sensing that that something monumental it represents can somehow give us the strength and wisdom to fulfill our charge—our promise to future generations.

So, the next time you find yourself in the vicinity of Yellowstone's North Entrance, whether coming or going, take the extra time to pass beneath this monument of native stone. If you're arriving, you'll be joining countless others who have come before you to pass through this portal to a Wonderland beyond. If you're departing, the view from the arch can serve as a steadfast reminder of all that lies beyond this historic point of entry—the area we know today as the Greater Yellowstone. Either way, just as Dorothy Brown Pardo found upon her arrival by train in 1911, you won't be disappointed.

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Left, "Roosevelt Arch at Gardiner, Montana," watercolor by Gustav Krollmann, 1936.

Above, F.J. Haynes photo, published by American News Company and printed in Germany, 1903.

Back cover, "Northern Pacific Arch," poster and back cover for Northern Pacific Railway brochure; artist unknown, 1912.

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The Roosevelt Arch

A centennial history of an American icon

by Lee H. Whittlesey and Paul Schullery

COURTESY HAYNES FOUNDATION COLLECTION, MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Visitors throng at the North Entrance to watch ceremonies celebrating the official Opening Day of the 1924 season.

"Stranger, look at yon beautiful arch,
erected by Uncle Sam out of hexagonal blocks of basalt!
That marks the entrance to the Wonderland of the World."
—Herbert Quick, *Yellowstone Nights,* 1911

The Roosevelt Arch, the formal North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park at Gardiner, Montana, has grown rich in historical associations over the course of its first century.[1] Its creation and career are intertwined with the Northern Pacific Railway (NPR) and the story of regional transportation; with the work of renowned army engineer Hiram Chittenden and the long involvement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Yellowstone; with the conservation achievements and irrepressible personality of Theodore Roosevelt; with the honored traditions of the Masons of Montana; and with the communities, colorful characters, and business interests of Gardiner and Mammoth Hot Springs. Like most architectural monuments, the arch's legacy is a combination of original intent and accumulated experience. And, like most Yellowstone landmarks, especially those that date to the time when the park was still commonly known as Wonderland, it has enjoyed the affection, admiration, and curiosity of generations of park visitors.

The impulse behind the arch's construction was a matter of inspiration, convenience, and opportunity. Strange as it may seem today, there was a con-

cern among park administrators, and some in the Gardiner community, that this most important entrance to Yellowstone National Park, nestled in an arid mountain basin, lacked sufficient visual fanfare to serve as the gateway to America's first and most famous national park. At the same time, and on a more prosaic and commercially urgent level, the Northern Pacific's tracks had just reached Gardiner, and the town needed a depot. And, most serendipitously, just as work got underway to satisfy these local needs, President Theodore Roosevelt decided to have a two-week outing in the wilds of Yellowstone National Park. This combination of factors, circumstances, and urges served as the impetus behind "Gardiner's big day" in the history of the West.[2]

As that day approached, in the middle of all this ambition and attention, though still only a promise of future grandeur and service, was the unconstructed arch, soon to be immortalized by a presidential dedication.

"A fortnight's rest:" Roosevelt's Yellowstone vacation begins

A strictly chronological telling of this story would probably settle right down in the technical architectural and engineering details of the arch. But the drama—and the fun—of the arch's history revolve primarily around human personalities, and none was more powerful or engaging than that of Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States. Roosevelt (if you must use a nickname, call him "TR;" his close friends knew better than to refer to him by the diminutive and slighting "Teddy"), elevated to office by the assassination of William McKinley less than two years before, was enormously popular in the West, where he claimed many friends and cherished many memories from his Dakota ranching days.[3]

Roosevelt had been to the park on a few earlier occasions, but this was to be his longest and most intense immersion in the wonders of Yellowstone.[4] Indeed, it was part of what remains even today one of the most ambitious domestic presidential trips ever undertaken. In eight weeks, "he was scheduled to travel fourteen thousand miles through 25 states, visiting nearly 150 towns and cities and giving an estimated two hundred speeches."[5] With such a hectic schedule, it is little wonder that he saw his Yellowstone time as so precious. Though Yellowstone was the focus of his greatest recreational interest on this trip, Roosevelt made briefer (though memorable and of great local significance) visits to the Grand Canyon and Yosemite National Parks, camping in Yosemite with mountaineer and writer John Muir.

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Roosevelt appears before a crowd at Livingston, Montana, prior to arriving in Yellowstone.

It was a trip long in the planning and, for all the studied casualness of the president's time in the park, carefully calculated in its details. Yes, it was a vacation, but with presidential purposes. TR's longstanding concern with the wildlife of the West, especially with the glamorous big game species, drew him to the park for a first-hand look at its famous and increasingly controversial elk herd and other large mammals.

Even this seemingly innocent interest had caused a stir of scandal when, some time before his visit, Roosevelt discreetly inquired of the park's acting superintendent, Major John Pitcher, if he might participate in one of the mountain lion hunts conducted to control that species. If not in the park, he wondered, might he go along on a hunt just outside the park's boundary?[6]

At that time, predators were lawfully (if mistakenly) regarded as vermin, and were seen as a threat to the park's more popular and publicly favored grazing species, so in principle at least, such a hunt might have seemed within reason. But TR was quickly learning that as president the solitary hunting adventures he had enjoyed for so many years were a thing of the past, replaced by media-infested picnics in which the hunter could not escape from his entourage long enough to find any game. Worse in this case was the risk of public disapproval if the lion hunt was perceived as special privilege granted to a powerful politician—he could not afford the appearance of being allowed to hunt where no other citizen was. Recognizing these obstacles, Roosevelt backed away from the idea of the hunt.

To further distance himself from any public unrest, as well as to ensure himself good company, Roosevelt invited his old friend John Burroughs, the beloved Catskills nature writer, to join him on the trip.[7] For many years, Burroughs's gentle tales of woodland life had entertained a huge American audience that had no special interest in hunting. It was apparently (and accurately) assumed that Burroughs's presence on the trip would signal to the public that Roosevelt would not hunt.

Roosevelt's train, the *Elysian,* made its way across the West with great public attention.[8] The "pilot train" and the "special train of the President of the United States" made their way up the Yellowstone River valley on April 8, 1903, with

an almost triumphal mood.[9] In his public remarks along the way, TR emphasized his own sense of homecoming, and the local papers editorialized in glowing terms on the character and qualities of this adopted son. "I am on my way to try to get a fortnight's rest," he told a cheering crowd during a whistle-stop speech in Livingston, Montana. "For the last 18 months I have taken everything as it came from coal strikes to trolley cars, and I feel I am entitled to a fortnight to myself."[10]

The presidential party reached Cinnabar a little after noon (until the Gardiner depot was complete, the NPR's Yellowstone terminus remained north of Gardiner, at Cinnabar, Montana). Among the many to greet them was C Troop of the Third Cavalry and Major John Pitcher, commanding officer of Fort Yellowstone at Mammoth Hot Springs, who also held the civilian title of Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. "My dear Major," said Roosevelt, "I'm back in my own country again."[11]

It was a cheerful reunion for these two old friends, who had previously encountered each other in a Yellowstone blizzard 12 years earlier. On that occasion, Roosevelt was riding north through the park following an extended elk hunt at Two Ocean Pass, south of the park. He and a companion encountered then-Lieutenant Pitcher and a troop of cavalry camped in a geyser basin along the Firehole River and gratefully accepted their hospitality, enjoying a long evening of storytelling around a campfire in the snow.[12]

Pitcher gave the president's schedule to the *Livingston Post* newspaper. Troop B, scheduled to accompany TR on his trip, would always be available to the president in its full strength, said Pitcher. Local guide Billy Hofer (whom Roosevelt knew at least by reputation as one of the park's leading woodsmen) and the six park scouts were to accompany his party. There was to be no strict itinerary, Pitcher announced: "The president will go where he pleases and when he wishes." Pitcher also cautioned the reporter from the *Post* that "no person will be permitted to approach the president's camp. There will be no person with him except his escort and John Burroughs." As to security, Pitcher said that "the approaches to the Park are all guarded by soldiers and pickets…it will be absolutely impossible for anyone to enter Wonderland while the president is there."[13]

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

The *Elysian*, Roosevelt's train, arrives at Cinnabar, Montana, April 8, 1903.

Considering Roosevelt's aforementioned concern that his activities in the park not seem to smack of special privilege, Pitcher's announcement requires some explaining. This was by no means as draconian an edict as it might at first seem to all of us who are accustomed to year-round access to some park roads. In fact, it might even be characterized as largely bluster. At this time, the park had only one brief tourist season: summer. Public visitation did not begin until well into June, when a combination of spring thaws and the limited snow-removal techniques of the day allowed the opening of some roads. Thus, Pitcher could easily "close" the park, because in April it was not yet formally open to visitation anyway, and wouldn't be for nearly two months. The very light traffic on a few park roads in winter and spring was all local, and under constant watch by soldiers and scouts who knew that almost all poaching of park animals was conducted by their less savory neighbors during this off season.[14]

But even if "closing the park" for the president wasn't much of an issue, it was still true that he had Yellowstone completely to himself in April 1903, and he must have loved it. Roosevelt's secretary William Loeb stated that his own orders were to "give absolutely nothing [to the press] concerning Mr. Roosevelt's movements. The president will be lost, as far as the world at large is concerned," said Loeb.[15]

As the elderly John Burroughs was loaded into an army ambulance for the five-mile trip up the hill to Fort Yellowstone (he assumed he'd ride a horse like the others, but happily climbed into the ambulance as if he expected it), and the *Elysian,* with its presidential staff and various other local dignitary passengers, was withdrawn to a sidetrack a few miles north of Gardiner in Cinnabar,

Roosevelt and Pitcher set off on horseback with the soldiers. They were delayed repeatedly so that the naturalist-president could admire and count various groups of pronghorn (he referred to them as "prongbuck"), bighorn sheep, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and ducks, as well as the small captive bison herd near Mammoth Hot Springs (informally known as "Mammoth").[16] With these absorbing distractions, it took the party two hours of rambling here and there across the rolling slopes of the Gardner River valley to cover the five miles to Fort Yellowstone.[17]

Fort Yellowstone, at Mammoth, was Roosevelt's first stop, as preparations were completed for his park tour. Clarence "Pop" Scoyen related to the Reverend Merv Olson in 1970 that he was present at Mammoth in 1903 when President Roosevelt rode in. "I was eight years old…my brother, mother, and I watched him ride into Mammoth on horseback," said Scoyen. "I shook his hand, and he remarked to my mother, 'I've got a couple of boys like that back home too.'"[18]

COLLECTION OF ROGER ANDERSON

Frontispiece from the 1907 edition of John Burroughs's *Camping & Tramping with Roosevelt.* The President is shown at Yosemite National Park's Glacier Point.

Roosevelt's time visiting Yellowstone is not the subject of this article, except as it bears on his time in Gardiner, and it is a tale well-told in other publications.[19] It is enough to say that for two weeks, the president tramped, rode, and skied his way through some of Yellowstone's most beautiful country. He savored the sight of thousands of elk and hundreds of other animals, soaking up the western wilderness scenery and spirit that had meant so much to him in younger times. He captured and, in the best naturalist tradition of the time, prepared the skin of a species of mouse that had not previously been identified in the park (he'd hoped it would be a new species but it was not). He gathered the notes and ideas for his long, stirring essay on wilderness reserves. Perhaps best of all, he provided his small group of companions with unforgettable days in the presence of (in Burroughs's words), "the most vital man on the continent, if not on the planet."[20] Burroughs's description of time spent around the presidential campfires is more evocative than any detailed itinerary of their days:

> *While in camp we always had a big fire at night in the open near the tents, and around this we sat upon logs or campstools, and listened to the President's talk. What a stream of it he poured forth! and what a varied and picturesque stream! —anecdote, history, science, politics, adventure, literature; bits of his experience as a ranchman, hunter, Rough Rider, legislator, civil service commissioner, police commissioner, governor, president—the frankest confessions, the most telling criticisms, happy characterizations of prominent political leaders, or foreign rulers, or members of his own Cabinet; always surprising by his candor, astonishing by his memory, and diverting by his humor.*[21]

And while the presidential party was making its exuberant way across the Yellowstone landscape, plans were forming back in Gardiner that would apply some of that exuberance to the memorialization of a growing local landmark.

Design and construction of the arch

Visitors approaching Yellowstone National Park from the north travel up the Yellowstone River valley between Livingston and Yankee Jim Canyon—a beautiful area rightly known as Paradise Valley. All along this route, they are treated to vistas of a classic, high western valley flanked by magnificent mountain ranges. After making the winding passage of Yankee Jim Canyon, they enter a much narrower valley, featuring rugged mountain peaks, colorful rock outcroppings, and a shining river that seems perpetually posed for calendar photography. It is a landscape in which the modern eye easily finds beauty, wildness, and the nearly mystical excitement of mountain scenery. But it was not always seen that way.

The arch was, along with the monumental rustic architecture of the Old Faithful Inn that was completed only a year later, the product of the aesthetics of its time. In the century since its construction, nature appreciation has evolved dramatically; landscapes once perceived as "barren," or as "wastelands," or even "evil," have been re-imagined with deepened respect for their special ecological and geological virtues.[22] For all our devotion to the arch as an historic structure and symbol, it should be admitted that it

would neither seem necessary nor have a chance of being built today. Modern landscape architects and park planners approach park settings much more accepting of the inherent beauties—however challenging those qualities may be to the uninitiated—of the unadorned native topography.

It is reasonably certain that the arch was the idea of Hiram Martin Chittenden, who believed that such a commanding structure would compensate for what was then seen as the relatively uninspiring character of the surrounding country at the park's North Entrance. Because Mammoth was park headquarters, and because the North Entrance was originally the only place where a railroad approached the natural features and hotels of the park, Chittenden, now remembered as the most influential of the early Corps of Engineers officers to work in Yellowstone, said that the North Entrance was "the most important of any [entrance], and this importance it will probably always retain."[23] Although ultimately wrong on that last point, Chittenden added, "it has been thought fitting, therefore, to provide some suitable entrance gate at this point. This was more important because the natural features of the country at this portion of the boundary are about the least interesting of any part of the Park, and the first impression of visitors upon entering the Park was very unfavorable."[24]

From 1886 to 1918, the U.S. Cavalry was responsible for protecting the park and overseeing public enjoyment of its wonders, and historians have now demonstrated the critical importance of the military period in shaping the park's public image and policies.[25] But the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had begun its Yellowstone career even earlier, in 1883, and in some very practical ways its historic role in the park was even more far-reaching. It was, in effect, the Corps's responsibility to see that the needs of public transportation in the park were satisfied by means harmonious with the park's goals of nature protection. Historians have praised the "aesthetic conservation" efforts of Hiram Chittenden and his fellow road-, bridge-, and facility-builders, recognizing their surprising sensitivity both to the visitor experience and to the landscape.[26] Chittenden was also a leading historian of the American West, and author of the first important history of the park.[27] In his distinguished career in Yellowstone, he oversaw road construction and related work during two key periods, 1891–1893 and 1899–1906.[28] It was only natural, then, and in keeping with the established order of things, that Chittenden should play a key role in the development of such an important landmark as the arch at the North Entrance. It was likewise certain that the arch would be a product of Chittenden's view of how a national park should best honor the natural scene.

The idea of an arch at the North Entrance dates at least to November 13, 1902, when the *Gardiner Wonderland* reported that in addition to the train depot then being planned, "on the rise of ground to the east will be erected the stone lodge for the squad of soldiers to be stationed here, and the stone archway through which the coaches will pass."[29] Planning for the arch's construction was underway by early 1903, and crews had started work on it before the president arrived on April 8. Historian Doris Whithorn has stated that Gardiner merchant Charles B. Scott obtained the contract for rock delivery on February 19, and "at once had men and teams at work delivering the massive stones to the site."[30] How Scott got this contract and from whom he got it is not known.

In fact, although Chittenden's role as originator of the idea seems sure, much remains uncertain about the planning, design, and construction of the arch. Historian Aubrey Haines wrote that the design for it was "worked up from his [Chittenden's] notes by Robert C. Reamer, architect of the Old Faithful and Canyon Hotels."[31] Reamer, perhaps the most noted professional architect to work in Yellowstone and the mastermind of some of the park's most beloved structures, does seem the sort of distinguished professional who might be recruited for such an important park project.

Unfortunately, Haines provided no citation for this information on Reamer's involvement in the arch, and we have been unable to confirm it. Ruth Quinn, long a researcher working on a biography of Reamer, cannot confirm it either.[32] Reamer was certainly involved in the design of the depot, and it could be that his involvement there became confused over time with the paternity of the nearby arch. Or, it could be that Reamer contributed his thinking to the plans for the arch because it was part of the same entrance-area landscape. The frequent connection of Reamer's name to a former home just north of the arch, known locally as the "Arch House," which now houses the Yellowstone Association's North Entrance Education Center in Gardiner, might have further contributed to the confusion. Both the Arch House and a nearby apartment house have been informally attributed to Reamer as designer or builder or inspiration, though documentation is lacking to support such statements.[33]

A number of other sources reiterate the shaky claims of Reamer's involvement in designing the arch. David Leavengood, an architectural historian who worked for a time on a biography of Reamer, stated, "By 1902, Reamer was working on the Old Faithful Inn at [Harry] Child's request as well as on the Roosevelt Arch for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."[34] Historian Anne Farrar Hyde also makes this claim, as do David Naylor and Win Blevins, all of whom cite Leavengood or Haines.[35] Unfortunately, Leavengood's two cited sources are an oral history interview that draws strictly on hearsay and Haines's uncited comment in *The Yellowstone Story*.

Because Aubrey Haines has almost invariably proven to be correct about this kind of historical information through the years, our inclination is to at least tentatively accept his judgment on the matter. But barring further documentation, the extent of Robert Reamer's involvement in the design of the arch must remain an open question.

Whatever cast of characters played whatever precise set of roles, the work was done efficiently and well. On March 19, 1903, the *Gardiner Wonderland* newspaper published "The Entrance Arch," further announcing the project.[36] The editor, who evidently had an inside track with the contractor to get such information, noted that the arch was to cost $10,000,

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

A rare photo of the arch under construction, summer 1903.

and that $1,000 had already been spent hauling hundreds of tons of rock for it:

> *The width of the opening through which teams and vehicles will pass will be twenty-five feet, with a height somewhat greater. A tower rises on each side of the arch to a height of 52 feet, and from near the base of the towers the arch begins to make its circle, the centre* [sic.] *wall of which rises to within a few feet of the height of the towers. On the outside of the towers the wall from the base is carried up on a perpendicular, thus jutting beyond the tower at the top. With a graceful curve wings droop from this line to an outer post something like forty feet on each side. These towers are thirteen feet square at the base and are drawn in until at the top they are perhaps half this size. Over the center of the arch carved in rustic letters will be a quotation from the act of dedication: "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people." On one tower, "Yellowstone National Park" and on the other: "Created by act of Congress March 3d* [sic.] *1872." The entire structure will be built of unhewn basaltic rock and will present a grand and imposing appearance in rustic.*[37]

It is worth emphasizing that the reporter was correct in ascribing the quotation, "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people," to the Yellowstone National Park Organic Act of March 1, 1872. Among the more intriguing folklore to have built up around the arch is the local "common knowledge" that this phrase was first uttered by Theodore Roosevelt. Perhaps this error originated because TR used the phrase during his dedication speech (see box). Whatever its source, it joins other Roosevelt-related mythology relating to Yellowstone, including the belief that he was personally responsible for the establishment of the park in 1872 (he was thirteen at the time) or, even more improbably, that he was the first explorer of the park area.[38]

In late March, railroad contractor Walter J. Bradshaw passed through Livingston on his way to Gardiner and told the *Enterprise* that the federal government and the Northern Pacific were cooperating on a project to build a depot and a stone archway there near the park boundary. On March 28, in an early announcement of the project based at least in part on information provided by Bradshaw, the *Enterprise* noted that the new "entrance or gateway to the Park will be a handsome arch" made from rocks of the vicinity. "The contractors have been ordered," said the newspaper, "not to remove the moss from the rocks used in the construction of the arch, so that it may present as natural an appearance as possible." Apparently, Bradshaw told the editor more, for the paper proclaimed that

the new park decorations would include a miniature waterfall near the arch (never built), a lake, and rustic houses and stores.[39]

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

A two-horse surrey approaches the arch shortly after its completion.

So far, our search of the official records for construction of this project has not yielded full clarification of the precise chain of command. As with the relative roles of the designers, there is uncertainty about who oversaw construction, and we are uncomfortably at the mercy of newspaper accounts for many of the details. On April 30, however, the *Livingston Post* stated that "Captain Chittenden" and his "force of craftsmen" were the ones erecting the arch. Thus, it appears that the U.S. Army Engineers (led by Chittenden) may have combined forces with the Northern Pacific Railway contractors (perhaps led by Bradshaw) to produce the arch. While Chittenden and Bradshaw at least worked on the arch, it appears that N.J. Ness, an architect from St. Paul who was quite well known for his work on a number of other railroad depots, was also somehow involved in its actual design.[40]

On April 9, the *Wonderland* published an extended description of the grand plans emerging for Gardiner's arch, complete with the artificial waterfall already mentioned and an additional lake that was never built:

> *A stone wall, running almost at right angle with the arch, will extend westward from the north wing a distance of about 200 feet. From the south end wing a like wall, about ten feet in height[,] will follow the contour of the hill and extend around to the west side of the new depot a distance of about 800 feet. The driveway from the arch to the depot describes a circle and within this circle a small artificial lake is being constructed and around the lake will be a beautiful lawn with all sorts of shrubbery and plants. From this lake a pipe will carry the large overflow under the track and into a[nother] lake of several acres in extent that will be made on all the low ground within the loop [never built]. The water for these lakes will come from the Gardiner [*sic.*, river] in the ditch now being made and will come through the arch in covered pipes and burst forth in a waterfall [never built] over the rocky cliff just beyond where the driveway forks. The surrounding hillsides will all be terraced and laid out in a most artistic manner.[41]*

Notwithstanding these extravagant dreams of landscape architects and engineers, the aridity of the Gardiner area made it impossible not only to build the waterfall and the extra pond at the arch, but ultimately to have *any* pond there at all. Nor could enough water be conveyed to keep alive the trees and shrubbery that workmen so lovingly planted there in 1902 and 1903.[42]

Construction of the arch began sometime in early April, and continued during summer 1903. Traveler Grace Hecox saw both the new depot and the arch under construction on July 15, and opined that Gardiner would soon "be a pretty place when everything is finished…A very pretty arch of native stone is being built to form the main entrance to the Park. A small engine is used to hoist the stone. We watched the derrick as it worked. Several colors are being used in the arch."[43] Historian Whithorn has stated that even when the arch was still incomplete and surrounded with scaffolding, wagons were allowed to pass through it.[44]

On August 15, 1903, workmen finished the arch. The *Gardiner Wonderland* reported that "last Saturday [August 15] witnessed the tearing down of all the scaffolding, and the arch now stands alone in all its magnificence."[45] Calling it the "great arch, which has become so noted throughout the United States," the newspaper ran a huge woodcut drawing of the new structure.[46] In addition to the arch, Chittenden built "an artificial body of water" between it and the depot and made provision for "the irrigation of grounds around it."[47] After describing

the new turnaround loop of the railroad that backed up to the turnaround loop of the stagecoach road, he described the new arch:

> *About 30 feet above the level of the [railroad] station grounds, a masonry arch has been constructed of columnar basalt found in the vicinity. The width of the opening is 20 feet, the height is 30 feet, and the maximum height of the structure is 50 feet. Two wing walls, 12 feet high, run out laterally from the arch to a distance of 50 feet from the center, where they terminate in small towers which rise about 3 feet above the wall. From these towers and parallel to the two branches of the loop, walls 8 feet high extend to the Park boundary. Three tablets in concrete are built into the outer face of the arch, with the following inscriptions: Above the keystone, "For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People;" on the left of the opening, "Yellowstone National Park," and on the right "Created by Act of Congress, March 1, 1872."*[48]

The cornerstone ceremony

It is no surprise that Masons felt a special stake in Yellowstone and its new architectural enterprise. From the park's earliest days, Masons had played a prominent role in its fortunes. Both Charles Cook and David Folsom, who visited the Yellowstone in 1869 in an attempt to verify or refute claims of its wonders then drifting around, were Masons. Nathaniel Langford, first superintendent of the park (1872–1877), was Grand Master of Masons in Montana in 1870, when he was a leading member of the Washburn exploring party in what would become the park, and his companion Cornelius Hedges, another important member of that group, held the same office next.[49]

According to the Gardiner newspaper at the time, Charles W. Miller of the Yellowstone Park Association (the hotel company) originated the idea of laying the arch's cornerstone with Masonic ceremonies.[50] Indeed, Masons at Mammoth Hot Springs appear to have been in the forefront of conceiving and planning the April 24, 1903 ceremony, including the hoped-for involvement of President Roosevelt (a member of Matinecock Masonic Lodge #806, Oyster Bay, New York). In addition to Miller, they were Henry Klamer, Alex Lyall, W.A. Hall, George Trischman, and C.C. Brandon, all of Livingston Masonic Lodge Number 32. These men sent a letter dated April 13 to Major Pitcher (also a Mason), Captain Chittenden, Harry Child of the hotel company, and Robert Walker, apparently a concession executive. Chittenden presented the letter to President Roosevelt while he was in camp near Yancey's (the meadow near present Tower Junction, current site of nightly chuckwagon cookouts during the summer). The president accepted the invitation, and upon receiving his reply the Masons referred the matter to "Grand Master Smith" at Phillipsburg, Montana, who was apparently already involved.[51]

This "Grand Master" was Frank E. Smith, who indicated his role many years later by stating, "it was at my instigation that [Roosevelt] was invited to participate on that occasion and make the address."[52] This seems to suggest that Smith was involved even before the April 13 letter of invitation was sent, and had had something to do with the idea of sending it. Though the relative significance of the various "players" in instigating the event remains uncertain, together this group of people launched the ceremony successfully.

Preparations for the ceremony

The Masons, the railroad, Gardiner and Livingston citizens, Major Pitcher, and Captain Chittenden all combined their efforts to make the event happen. The NPR engaged 40 stagecoaches at Livingston to take overflow passengers (who couldn't get on the train) to Gardiner, and the town of Gardiner hired the Livingston Volunteer Fire Department band to play.[53] "Gardiner is appropriately decorated for the occasion," announced the Bozeman newspaper on the big day, with "flowers in profusion beautifying the vicinity of the arch…now eight feet high."[54] Photos of Gardiner that day show numerous American flags and red, white, and blue bunting decorating some of the storefronts.

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Gardiner on Dedication Day, decorated for the occasion.

Many prominent Masons arrived in Gardiner on Thursday evening's train, and held an evening meeting in the Masonic Hall to arrange the details of the next day's activities. E.C. Day of Helena addressed the Masons and gave a speech about President Roosevelt that was described as "eloquent." Billings, Red

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Visitors and local residents gathered for the arch dedication, April 24, 1903. This photo was taken from the hill just south of the present site of the arch, looking back at the town of Gardiner. The crane used to lower the cornerstone is visible at far left.

Lodge, Big Timber, and Miles City all sent delegations.[55] Captain Hiram Chittenden had charge of the arrangements for the laying of the stone.[56]

Gardiner's big day: April 24, 1903

At least three regional newspapers covered the occasion: the *Livingston Post*, the *Livingston Enterprise*, and the *Gardiner Wonderland*.[57] This account of the festivities is taken primarily from those three long newspaper articles.

"The flashing swords of the officers, the martial music of the band, and the lusty cheering of the assembled multitude," gushed one reporter, "gave the scene an aspect which would inspire enthusiasm and patriotism in the breast of a cynic." April 24 dawned clear and warm in Gardiner, a "magnificent" day for such an inspiring celebration.[58]

In Livingston that Friday morning, the city was "swarming with visitors Parkward bound." The first train (12 cars in length) departing (10 a.m.) to Gardiner was besieged by anxious celebrants who scrambled all over each other for seats. Beleaguered railroad officials had to recruit four additional cars and a second engine to carry the horde, which included Livingston Mayor Charles Garnier and the Livingston band in the first cars. "There were 1300 people aboard it when the train pulled out of Livingston," proclaimed a reporter who was there, "with the band playing a lively air and the people cheering themselves hoarse."[59]

Along the route, the train stopped to receive more people. More than 100 crowded on at the small town of Fridley (today's Emigrant), and about 400 more at Horr (near present LaDuke Hot Springs) and Cinnabar (about three miles downstream from Gardiner). Upon reaching Gardiner at around noon, the hungry, thirsty, early crowd rushed for the town's hotels, saloons, and restaurants.[60] At about 2:00 p.m., stage drivers ushered a line of ten or more four-horse coaches out of the park and lined them up to be photographed by the eastern photographers who were present.[61]

When the second train, carrying the Masons and almost as many people as the first, arrived at 2:30 p.m., the town of Gardiner was "simply overwhelmed."[62] So great was the throng that many would have gone hungry had they not had the foresight to bring their own lunches.[63] Estimates of the size of the crowd ranged from 2,000 to 4,000, but the *Livingston Post*'s "careful estimate" (done by dividing the crowd into "lots" and performing the math) was probably the best one, and it gave 3,700 as the likely attendance.[64]

Security was in evidence, no doubt heightened by memories of the assassination of President William McKinley less than two years earlier. The *Enterprise* noted that "guards were posted all around the spot at points of vantage on the closely surrounding hillsides," and

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Troops B and C of the Third Cavalry lead Roosevelt's party into town, possibly led by a Lieutenant Lesher, Captain Johnson, and a local canine resident.

the roped pathway to the speakers' stand was "lined with cavalrymen and a lot of special deputy sheriffs were scattered all over the grounds."[65]

Around 3:30 p.m., dignitaries began to move into place. Troops B and C of the Third Cavalry, led by Captain Johnson and Lieutenant Lesher, trotted into town from Mammoth Hot Springs and lined up on the road east of the arch to await President Roosevelt. The Masons formed at Holem's store with the band, and all marched to the arch and found their roped-off space. Masonic Grand Master Frank E. Smith and other Masons climbed onto a raised platform immediately below the cornerstone, which was swinging from a double-poled crane decorated with a flag and bunting. Photos show that many of the Masons were wearing their characteristic white aprons at the laying of the stone, and a Masonic writer later noted, "those who were to have speaking parts had provided themselves with Prince Albert coats and silk hats."[66]

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Gardiner "Mayor" James McCartney (riding with five-year-old Paul Hoppe on his lap), President Roosevelt, and Major John Pitcher arrive at the dedication ceremonies.

At about 4:10 p.m., the president's entourage arrived from Mammoth. "The eager eyes of the crowd," said the *Post*, "discerned his approach when he was still half mile distant, and a mighty cheer broke forth."[67] Said the *Enterprise*, "All were splendidly mounted and the cavalcade came down the road at a sweeping gallop." Accompanied by Major Pitcher, and apparently using the route that currently passes in front of the Xanterra personnel office, Roosevelt rode west down Park Street to the platform at the incomplete arch. A photo of him and Major Pitcher taken as they were riding west reveals that another man accompanied them. He was probably Gardiner "Mayor" James McCartney, who carried five-year-old Paul Hoppe on the saddle in front of him.[68] Roosevelt wore a black coat, military trousers, and a soft black hat. An observer noted that the president appeared to be in the best of health and was riding the gray horse named Bonaparte that he had ridden into the park sixteen days earlier.[69]

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

The flag-draped crane used to lift the cornerstone is prominent in this photo of the speakers' stand and assembled dignitaries. The photo was taken looking to the North-Northeast, roughly from the present site of the arch's south tower.

As he reached the entrance to the roped aisle in front of the platform, the cavalry presented sabers in a salute to the president. The band struck up "Hail Columbia" (in 1903, "Hail to the Chief" was not yet being played). Accompanied by Captain Hiram Chittenden and Major Pitcher, Roosevelt walked up the aisle, passing between the two sides of the large crowd. "Cheer upon cheer greeted his appearance," proclaimed the *Post*, and Roosevelt "walked swiftly, with hat raised in acknowledgment of the salute."[70]

Masonic Grand Master Smith presided over the occasion (he "conducted the ritualistic ceremonies of the order"), along with Sol Hepner (Deputy Grand

NPS PHOTO

Left, Close-up of cornerstone today.

Below, President Roosevelt watches as the cornerstone is manipulated.

COURTESY DORIS WHITHORN

Master), Cornelius Hedges (Grand Secretary), Lew Callaway (Grand Senior Warden), Samuel Nye (Acting Grand Secretary), D.A. McCaw (Acting Grand Junior Warden), and "other officers."[71] The cornerstone was suspended on heavy block and tackle from a large bunting-bedecked derrick of two wooden poles, each topped with an American flag.

In preparation for the event, the Masons gathered a collection of items to be placed in a "canister" that would then go into a "depository."[72] Modern Masonic procedures also refer to this as a "box" or a "casket," but its precise character is not known.[73] According to the *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of Montana, the following items were placed in the container:

- *Copy of the World's Almanac, 1903;*
- *Copy of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Montana for 1902;*
- *Copy of Northern Pacific Railway descriptive pamphlet, 1903;*
- *Copy Masonic Code of Montana;*
- *Pictures of Hon. N.P. Langford, first Superintendent of the Park, one of the Washburn party of 1870, also of Cornelius Hedges member of the same party, who first suggested making a National Park;*
- *Original articles by the latter published in the Helena Herald soon after the return of the party in 1870;*
- *Copies of the Livingston daily papers;*
- *Sundry coins of the United States; and*
- *Copy of the* Holy Bible.

Several things prepared for the deposit had to be omitted on account of the size of the box, such as the Memorials of the Montana Legislature asking for the establishment of the park and the act of Congress setting it apart for the purpose.[74]

Research by historian Doris Whithorn revealed that the Bible belonged to Rev. Edward Smith of the Livingston Methodist Church.[75] One of the reporters said that the newspapers included were the *Livingston Enterprise*, *Livingston Post*, *Gardiner Wonderland*, and *Montana Record*. This reporter also said that several photographs of park scenes taken at the time were included, as was a portrait of President Roosevelt. The reporter continued, saying that all these items were "placed in the depository to serve as a record in the event of the destruction of the arch by the elements in the centuries which are to come."[76]

The stone is easily identified today. As you enter the arch from the Gardiner side, the stone is low on the inside (i.e., park side) corner of the right tower of the arch. The stone is more obviously "worked" and more squarely finished than the stones around it, which were intentionally left rough and irregularly angular to display the rugged natural contours of individual stones and to preserve as much as possible of the colorful appearance of the natural rock with its coating of lichens.[77] Measured in place today, the stone is 21½ inches deep, 15 inches wide, and 20½ inches high. On the "inside" surface (that is, the side facing across the inner arch), are incised, "Apr 24," with "1903" directly underneath.

There has been some uncertainty in historical writing about the placement of the box of memorabilia. As quoted earlier, at least one contemporary account did say that the box was placed in the cornerstone itself. However, also as quoted, the same reporter on other occasions referred to a "depository" as the resting place of the box. Historian Aubrey Haines ana-

lyzed the sequence of events as described in the newspaper accounts and concluded that in fact the depository was a "recess" in the stone upon which the cornerstone was laid.[78] This is plausible. The base stonework was already completed at this corner of the pillar, and is slightly visible in photographs; Haines's scenario suggests that the "depository" was a space cut or left in this lower stonework, into which the box was placed, and upon which the cornerstone was then lowered.

This makes for a sequence of events that matches the newspaper reports and the Masonic records. For example, the *Livingston Post* reporter specifically stated, "Prior to the lowering of the stone, a canister containing numerous articles was placed in the depository."[79] Photographs of that stage of the ceremony show the stone, encumbered by its hooks and tackle, still suspended over the heads of the men. The men may have been able to reach the cornerstone as it hung there, but it seems an unlikely and undignified time for them to be placing anything inside it. Also, though the photographs do not show all sides of the cornerstone at this stage, the sides they do show reveal no indication of a cavity in the stone itself.

All of these logistical details aside, now that the preliminaries were complete, the big moment had come. Now that the box was in place, it was time to prepare the surface and lower the stone. With the cornerstone suspended above them, Grand Master Smith passed the trowel to the president, who "spread the mortar on the bed that was to receive the stone and, at the proper moment in the ceremony, the huge block of basalt was lowered into place."[80] The Masons poured corn, wine, and oil upon the stone, these being "the elements of consecration" whose meaning was at this point explained to the audience.[81] The cornerstone was then "tested by the implements of Masonry and pronounced well-formed, truly laid and correctly proved."[82]

The sense of history among many onlookers was palpable, and not only because they were witnessing a presidential event in their little community. "Conspicuous among the Masonic grand lodge officers who conducted the cornerstone laying," noted the *Gardiner Wonderland*, "was one who played a most important part in the history of the park—Judge Cornelius Hedges of Helena."[83] The Gardiner newspaper lamented the fact that David Folsom of the 1869 Folsom-Cook-Peterson party had been unable to attend the festivities.[84] Though subsequent historians would show that Hedges was not the first to suggest making Yellowstone a national park (he was probably preceded even by Folsom), there is no question that the audience was justified in their mood of a momentous occasion.[85]

The President then ascended the speakers' stand, which had been "built eight feet above the ground on the arch wall." Accompanying him were Secretary William Loeb, Captain Chittenden, Major Pitcher, John Burroughs, "Mayor" J.C. McCartney, and "others." The crowd cheered the president as he passed to the stand, and he lifted his hat and smiled. Pitcher then introduced McCartney, who was to introduce the president. But McCartney, apparently suffering from stage fright, "was only able to mutter 'Ladies and Gentlemen, President Roosevelt.'"[86]

NPS ARCHIVES

President Roosevelt addresses the crowd. Hiram Chittenden stands at Roosevelt's left. Starting third from his right are John Burroughs, James McCartney, and Major John Pitcher.

"As the president came forward, the crowd broke into a prolonged cheer," proclaimed the *Post* reporter approvingly, "which echoed back from the hills and rolled in mighty waves up to the speakers' stand. The president stood some few seconds before he could begin."[87] Some accounts suggest that he made a few remarks before beginning his prepared speech (see box, next pages).[88]

According to the *Post*, the text of the speech was published as "an exact copy of the speech that the president prepared in advance. While he said all that is above quoted, he said many other things that do

not appear in the printed speech. He constantly interpolated remarks which occurred to him upon the spur of the moment."[89] If this is the case, it may mean that a copy, prepared in advance, was distributed to the press, or perhaps was made available afterward. In at least one photograph made during the speech, the president is holding in his hand some kind of document or paper, which may have been his text.

When the speech was concluded, the president made a number of other "off the cuff" remarks. He praised the people of the West and decried idleness. He cheered the old soldiers who were represented by Thomas Mains of Livingston's Farragut Post No. 7. And he made humorous references to his days of "punching cattle" in North Dakota.[90] It was all a great success. The *Gardiner Wonderland* editorialized that "The president met and captured this entire country. The boys all say that his equal is not to be found in these United States."[91]

Following the speech, there was a "presentation by the Masonic Grand Lodge to the president of a beautiful Masonic charm. The background of the charm is a Montana gold nugget. On the face of the nugget the Masonic square and compass have been placed and at the top is a plate bearing the inscription, 'T.R. 1903.' On a plate at the bottom of the charm is the word, 'Montana.' The presentation was made by Grand Master Smith, who, with the other officers of the grand lodge, gathered around the president in the speakers' stand after the speech of the day had been finished."[92]

Before leaving the stand, Roosevelt recognized some of the men who had been his companions during his park stay. Spotting James McBride (one of the park scouts, later chief park ranger) in the crowd, Roosevelt called out, "Mac, oh Mac! Come up here. I want to see you." McBride went up and the president shook his hand and thanked him for his help on the park trip. Roosevelt then turned to the two troops of U.S. Cavalry and thanked

Mr. Mayor; Mr. Superintendent, and My Fellow Citizens:

I wish to thank the people of Montana generally, and those of Gardiner and Cinnabar especially, and more especially still all those employed in the Park, whether in civil or military capacity, for my very enjoyable two weeks holiday.

It is a pleasure now to say a few words to you at the laying of the corner stone of the beautiful arch which is to mark the entrance to this Park. The Yellowstone Park is something absolutely unique in the world so far as I know. Nowhere else in any civilized country is there to be found such a tract of veritable wonderland made accessible to all visitors, where at the same time not only the scenery of the wilderness, but the wild creatures of the Park are scrupulously preserved, as they were the only change being that these same wild creatures have been so carefully protected as to show a literally astonishing tameness. The creation and preservation of such a great national playground in the interests of our people as a whole is a credit to the nation; but above all a credit to Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. It has been preserved with wise foresight. The scheme of its preservation is noteworthy in its essential democracy. Private game preserves, though they may be handled in such a way as to be not only good things for themselves but good things for the surrounding community, can yet never be more than poor substitutes, from the standpoint of the public, for great national play grounds such as this Yellowstone Park. This Park was created, and is now administered for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. The government must continue to appropriate for it, especially in the direction of completing and perfecting an excellent system of driveways. But already its beauties can be seen with great comfort in a short space of time and at an astonishingly small cost, and with the sense on the part of every visitor that it is in part his property; that it is the property of Uncle Sam and therefore of all of us. The only way that the people as a whole can secure to themselves and their children the enjoyment in perpetuity of what the Yellowstone Park has to give, is by assuming the ownership in the name of the nation and jealously safeguarding and preserving the scenery, the forests, and the wild creatures. When we have a good system of carriage roads throughout the Park—for of course it would be very unwise to allow either steam or electric roads in the Park—we shall have a region as easy and accessible to travel in as it is already every whit as interesting as is similar territory of the Alps or the Italian Riviera. The geysers, the extraordinary hot springs, the lakes, the mountains, the canyon and cataracts unite to make this region something not paralelled [*sic.*] elsewhere on the globe. It must be kept for the benefit and enjoyment of all of us; and I hope to see a steadily increasing number of our people take advantage of its attractions. At present it is rather singular that a greater number of people come from Europe to see it than come from our own eastern states to see it. The people near by seem awake to its beauties; and I hope that more and more of our people who dwell far off will appreciate its really marvelous character. Incidentally, I should like to point out that sometime people will surely awake to the fact that the Park has special beauties to be seen in winter; and any hardy man who can go through it in that season on skis will enjoy himself as he scarcely could elsewhere.

I wish especially to congratulate the people of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, and notably you of Gardiner and Cinnabar and the immediate outskirts of the Park, for the way in which you heartily co-operate with the superintendent to prevent acts of vandalism and destruction. Major Pitcher has explained to me how much he owes to your co-operation and your lively appreciation of the fact that the Park is simply being kept in the interest of all of us, so that everyone may have the chance to see its wonders with ease and comfort at the minimum of expense. I have always thought it was a

THEODORE ROOSEVELT COLLECTION, HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

them as well.[93]

Descending the platform, Roosevelt passed through the crowd to his horse while the throng cheered him wildly. Mounting up, the president rode slowly to Cinnabar and his train, accompanied by Major Pitcher and the cavalry. Along the way, he responded repeatedly to cheers from people lining the road. At the train, Roosevelt dismounted and shook hands with Captain Johnson and Lieutenant Lesher of the cavalry and others, bidding them all goodbye and thanking them for their help.[94]

At the train, a rough-looking man approached Roosevelt. Not knowing who he was, Frank Tyree of the Secret Service quickly grabbed him by the neck and shoved him back ten feet. Seeing that the man meant no harm, the president reached out his hand. The man took it and grinned at having been mistaken for a dangerous person.[95]

After Montana Congressman Dixon boarded the train and introduced some other dignitaries to Roosevelt, the president's train left Cinnabar at 6 p.m. It proceeded slowly to Livingston, arriving at 9:15 p.m., and then on to Billings, Montana.[96]

Yellowstone had provided Roosevelt a rare respite, and his gratitude was evident in his remarks about his return to the world of politics. In a letter written as he was about to depart Yellowstone, Roosevelt confided that "I have really enjoyed the past two weeks in the Park, but to the next six I look forward with blank horror."[97] On the day of the arch's dedication, he wrote a long letter to his friend, conservationist George Bird Grinnell, concluding that "Tomorrow I go back to the political world, to fight about trusts and the Monroe Doctrine and the Philippines and the Indians and the Tariff…"[98]

Theodore Roosevelt never returned to Yellowstone, so he never visited or passed through the completed arch that would eventually bear his name. According to a recent biographer, Roosevelt started his western trip in a state of

liberal education to any man of the east to come west, and he can combine profit with pleasure if he will incidentally visit this park—and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and the Yosemite, and take a sea voyage to Alaska. Major Pitcher reports to me, by the way, that he has received invaluable assistance from the game wardens of Montana and Wyoming, and that the present game warden of Idaho has also promised his hearty aid.

The preservation of the forest is of course the matter of prime importance in every public reserve of this character. In this region of the Rocky mountains and the great plains the problem of the water supply is the most important which the home maker has to face. Congress has not of recent years done anything wiser than in passing the irrigation bill; and nothing is more essential to the preservation of the water supply than the preservation of the forests. Montana has in its water power a source of development which has hardly yet been touched. The water power will be seriously impaired if ample protection is not given the forests. Therefore this park, like the forest reserves generally, is of the utmost advantage to the country around from the merely utilitarian side. But of course this Park, also because of its peculiar features, is to be preserved as a beautiful natural playground. Here all the wild creatures of the old days are being preserved, and their overflow into the surrounding country means that the people of the surrounding country, so long as they see that the laws are observed by all, will be able to insure to themselves and to their children and to their children's children much of the old time pleasures of the hardy life of the wilderness and of the hunter in the wilderness. This pleasure, moreover, can under such conditions be kept for all who have the love of adventure and the hardihood to take advantage of it with small regard for what their future may be.

I cannot too often repeat that the essential features of the present management of the Yellowstone Park, as in all similar places, is its essential democracy—it is the preservation of the scenery, of the forests[,] of the wilderness life and the wilderness game for the people as a whole instead of leaving the enjoyment thereof to be confined to the very rich who can control private preserves. I have been literally astounded at the enormous quantities of elk and at the number of deer, antelope and mountain sheep which I have seen on their wintering grounds and the deer and sheep in particular are quite as tame as range stock. A few buffalo are being preserved. I wish very much that the Government could somewhere provide for an experimental breeding station of cross-breds [*sic.*] between buffalo and the common cattle. If those crossbreds [*sic.*] could be successfully perpetuated we should have animals that would produce a robe quite as good as the old buffalo robe with which twenty years ago everyone was iamiliar [*sic.*], and animals moreover which would be so hardy that I think they would have a distinct commercial importance. They would, for instance, be admirably suited for alaska [*sic.*], a territory which I look to see develop astoundingly within the next decade or two, not only because of its furs and fisheries, but because of its agricultural and pastoral possibilities.

In conclusion let me thank you again for your greeting. It has been to me the most genuine pleasure again to see this great western country. I like the country, but above all I like the men and women.[1]

—President Theodore Roosevelt, April 24, 1903,
Gardiner, Montana.

[1]transcribed verbatim from *Wonderland* article. The *Livingston Post* version of this same speech varies in a few specifics, such as a few different words and several changes in comma location, and also differs in omitting the paragraph that begins, " I wish especially to congratulate the people of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, and notably you of Gardiner and Cinnabar. . . ."

COURTESY HAYNES FOUNDATION COLLECTION, MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

F.J. Haynes photo of the newly-completed Gardiner Depot and arch, with Chittenden's pond, 1903. The W.A. Hall store (today's Cecil's), at center rear, is also newly completed.

The Gardiner depot and other improvements

The Northern Pacific Railway extended its tracks to Gardiner in 1902.[1] By June 20 of that year, practice trains ran all the way into Gardiner, and on July 3, the Gardiner newspaper reported that the regular train unloaded passengers "for the first time" in Gardiner.[2] However, there was not yet a depot, nor was there a track loop to allow trains to turn around. Historian Whithorn says trains had to be backed to the "Y" at Cinnabar for another year until workmen could construct a loop at Gardiner.[3] In early 1903, Northern Pacific officials began planning for construction of a depot. In late April, the *Gardiner Wonderland* newspaper announced that railroad officials had awarded architect Robert Reamer the contract to build the structure.[4] On July 2, the depot was "so nearly completed that it was expected to unload passengers there on Saturday," but last minute touches were delaying that. The *Wonderland* reported that the depot's new sign, reading "Gardiner," was cast by the Herzog iron works of St. Paul and "is a skeleton affair frame, with letters about three feet long."[5]

On July 11, the *Livingston Enterprise* noted that the depot was "nearing completion," and on August 6, the Wonderland bragged that the finished depot was the best in the West:

The depot at this place is now completed and stands alone as the most unique and attractive building of the kind in the west. In workmanship and finish it is something to be proud of and it is an attraction that tourists never tire of examining. The long sidewalks are covered with shades on a framework of logs, all of which is supported on a central tree not less than two feet in diameter. The roofs are all painted green.[6]

At the completion of the depot, Northern Pacific Railway director of advertising and historian Olin Wheeler described it and the surroundings for the railroad's colorful promotional booklet, *Wonderland 1904.* For all its adjectival excesses, Wheeler's description was fundamentally correct, and in keeping with the somewhat breathless rhetoric so popular among both promoters and the tourists themselves at the time:

In 1903, the Northern Pacific having extended the railway from Cinnabar to Gardiner, a railway station was constructed that, with its surroundings, is one of the most unique, cosey [sic], and attractive to be found in the United States. From the Bitterroot valley and mountains, selected pine logs were brought which, with the smooth, richly colored bark on, were fashioned into a symmetric, well-proportioned, tasteful, and rustic building, the interior of which, with its quaint hardware, comfortable, alluring appointments, and ample fireplace and chimney, is in keeping with the inviting exterior.

The whole combination of railway and train, rustic station, lake, town, arch, and landscape, added to the chattering throng of humanity, full of life and laughter as it hustles aboard the line of waiting coaches with their champing, impatient horses, is full of interest and enthusiasm, and a very fitting prelude to the wonderful trip ahead.[7]

[1] The *Park County Republican* noted on May 10 that the Park Branch was soon to be extended to Gardiner and that the extension would cause "a loss to Cinnabar which will knock that town into a cocked hat." "Will Be Extended," *Park County Republican,* May 10, 1902. See also "Gardiner the Terminus," *Gardiner Wonderland*, May 17, 1902.

[2] "Passengers Transferred at Gardiner," *Gardiner Wonderland*, July 3, 1902.

[3] Whithorn, *Twice Told,* vol. I, p. 44.

[4] *Gardiner Wonderland*, April 30, 1903.

[5] "The New Depot," *Gardiner Wonderland*, July 2, 1902.

[6] *Livingston Enterprise,* July 11, 1903. *Gardiner Wonderland*, August 6, 1903. No detailed study of the depot's construction using NPR records at Minnesota Historical Society has been attempted here.

[7] Olin D. Wheeler, *Wonderland 1904* (St. Paul: NPR), 1904, p. 34-35. Chester Lindsley has stated that the logs of the depot were firs. Lindsley, *The Chronology of Yellowstone National Park* (Mammoth: YLMA), 1939, p. 179.

fatigue, and the trip gave him new energy. Yellowstone remained on his mind.[99] A long-time follower of the park's fate, Roosevelt had always been keenly aware of the importance of the idea of the park's "essential democracy," an idea he stressed in his speech. In other words, as he expressed it in the speech, the parks were essentially democratic because they ensured that large tracts of wild, beautiful nature would always be available to the general public, not just to the wealthy who could afford to buy and maintain their own private reserves.

To Roosevelt, Yellowstone and the other national parks did not represent the mainstream of American natural resource management; that was found in the national forests and other public and private lands whose resources—whether timber, minerals, water, wildlife, or others—were to be intelligently consumed in a way that would permit their perpetuation. Roosevelt was the Progressive Era's foremost preacher of the "gospel of efficiency."[100] But Yellowstone and its sister parks held a special place in Roosevelt's heart precisely because of their difference. They were to be used in a new way, to allow Americans to enjoy something else, something very *non*-commercial that he obviously saw as precious: a glimpse of, and a chance to engage with, the natural heritage of the North American continent.[101]

And, like some other forward-looking conservationists of his time, he was able to take a broader view of what a park contributed, in utilitarian terms, to the region around it. Roosevelt, Grinnell, and a few others saw that Yellowstone National Park served as a reservoir for wildlife whose seasonal migrations could perpetually restock game-lands beyond park boundaries. Thinking even more in terms of ecosystem process (a term they would not have recognized, though they understood its meaning), they saw Yellowstone's wild, forested topography as a natural "manager" of the annual release of water to surrounding agricultural lands.[102] Thus, for early conservationists, Yellowstone performed tremendous practical and economic services to society at the same time that it acted as a kind of living museum of an earlier America. In his vision of Yellowstone, Roosevelt was fully aware of both kinds of values: the immediate, economic ones, and the long-term, aesthetic and spiritual ones.

COURTESY SUSAN AND JACK DAVIS

W.S. Berry postcard of the arch, 1907.
Note the long-since-gone shrubbery and pond.

The Arch since 1903

In building the arch, Chittenden and his colleagues were attempting to overcome what they saw as a shortage of inspiring scenery in the immediate neighborhood. Standing at the arch today, and looking up to the heights of Electric Peak, Sepulchre Mountain, Mount Everts, and the other nearby eminences, and observing the ecological treasures of the area, it is difficult to sympathize with these peoples' need for a more inspiring setting, but they reflected the attitudes of their time. From the arch, a new, improved "avenue" into the park extended east to the Gardner River, and along it Chittenden planted two bordering lines of trees. He boasted that because all of his improvements were supplied with irrigation water, "the whole effect will be to give a dignified and pleasing entrance to the Park at the point where the great majority of visitors enter it." [103]

These were admirable plans, but within a few years only the arch and the depot would stand. A Fred Mikesell photograph shows the rocked-in, heart-shaped pond and neatly landscaped area between the arch and the depot with its irrigated shrubs about 1903.[104] A suggestion had it that colors would be added to the pond with goldfish in one side and whitefish in the other, but that appears never to have happened, and Chittenden's landscaped arrangement lasted for only a few years. Keeping the pond supplied with water, the foliage around it green, and the trees along the avenue irrigated proved impossible in the aridity of the Gardiner area. Besides, some of Chittenden's chosen ornamental vegetation seemed particularly ill-adapted to such a dry climate; among his choices were "half a dozen sequoias" from California.[105] Gradually, the pond dried up, and so did Chittenden's bushes and trees. [106]

This almost immediate decline was perhaps a precursor of things to come; what seems most remarkable about the arch's life, at least for its first half century or so, is how quickly it went from being perceived as very nearly a wonder of the world to seeming nearly expend-

able. While visitors detraining at the depot must have enjoyed the moment or two it took to approach the arch and then leave it behind, and while the many thousands who had this experience may well have admired or photographed the fine masonry and generous sentiment of the arch's great quotation, there are indications that the arch very quickly had little mystique, as of a sacred monument, in its local image.

Another especially notable day in the North Entrance's early years—and certainly one of the big days in the park's history as well—was July 31, 1915. On that day, Mr. K.R. Seiler, of Redwing, Minnesota, led a small group of automobiles into the park, to become the first officially permitted visitors to bring their cars into Yellowstone (August 31 had been set as the big day for this huge change in the Yellowstone experience, but the superintendent, nervous about the crowd of vehicles that might show up, let a few in the day before). Mr. Seiler's Ford carried immense historical symbolism of its own; it was the leader of a flood of new visitors, new commercial opportunities for park concessioners, and new ways to enjoy Yellowstone.[107] The arch would witness all of these changes, and welcome countless motorists after Mr. Seiler.

We have not found any contemporary notice, either in official records or in regional newspapers, of the arch's 25th anniversary. Two years later, in a remodeling for which we have yet to find any explanation, the wing wall that extended from the main arch wall toward Gardiner was removed. Judging from photographs of the street layout at the time and later, this removal could have been to facilitate realignment of the road connecting Gardiner's business district with the arch.

At the time the arch was built in 1903, it was in a direct line with all traffic to the north entrance; hence all visitors from the north (except delivery vehicles using the "truck gate" located closer to concessioner buildings along the Gardner River) passed through it. The main road from Livingston was, at that time, the equivalent of today's "Old Yellowstone Trail," known locally as the Stephens Creek Road, that runs west from the arch, on the west side of the Yellowstone River to the old Cinnabar townsite and on to Corwin Springs, Montana, and points north. Rerouting of the state highway to Gardiner (now U.S. 89) in 1929 moved the arch off the main road to Gardiner. Ever since then, drivers wishing to pass through the arch have had to go a little out of their way to do so, (even if they may not know it, because a road sign points them in that direction). Today, drivers entering Gardiner on U.S. 89 and crossing the Yellowstone River bridge proceed to the T at Park Street and then turn right (west), driving the length of Park Street until the arch is reached around a little hairpin curve that lines them up to pass through the arch.[108]

The indignity of neglect was combined with a genuine threat to the arch's existence in 1947. This must, at least symbolically, serve as the low point in the arch's history. On July 8 of that year, National Park Service Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson sent a memorandum quite startling but at the time was apparently not unimaginable:

NPS PHOTO

The first restored wolves arrive in Yellowstone, January 12, 1995.

Today's arch as symbol and conscience

In the past two decades, the Roosevelt Arch has enjoyed a heightening public awareness of its original symbolism. The power of this renewed symbolism was surely evident on January 12, 1995, when a small convoy of National Park Service vehicles passed through the arch with eight Canadian wolves, each in its individual crate. There was no doubt of the instant at which the new wolves entered Yellowstone National Park and thereby made wolf recovery seem like a reality; it happened precisely as the trailer containing them passed under the Roosevelt Arch. The road was lined with a large crowd of wolf-recovery supporters, Gardiner schoolchildren, media, and other observers for what was perhaps the most historic and highly visible event involving the arch since its dedication in 1903.[1]

Another event of perhaps even greater drama and meaning occurred on February 27, 1999, when about 100 members of various Native American tribes concluded a 500-mile march from the Black Hills of South Dakota with a ceremony just inside the park near the arch. Representatives of the Lakota Sioux, Algonquin, Apache, Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Crow, Navajo, Nez Perce, Northern Cheyenne, Southern Ute, and Tuscarora tribes were present during a ceremony honoring the American bison.[2] The march aimed to call attention to the slaughter, by management agencies, of Yellowstone-area bison that left the park attempting to follow historic migration routes. Joseph Chasing Horse, a Lakota Sioux leader of the group, said that, "Long ago, the buffalo gave his blood for us; Today we give our blood for him."[3] The usefulness of the arch's symbolism will no doubt be heightened as more such events occur.

The arch's famous inscription, "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people," has drawn the attention, interpretation, and debate of several generations of people since the arch was completed. Like all rhetoric that invokes some vaguely defined "people" or "public," the arch's inscription is regu-