CHAPTER TWELVE

Mission 66—A Concessioner's Obituary 1956–1966

During the first week in February 1955, the idea for Mission 66 came to Director Conrad Wirth. He pondered how he could obtain the needed funds to get the national park areas up to a reasonable standard, not only in public use, but in resource protection, interpretation, development, legislation, financing, and other park operation needs. Aware that other agencies, which had long-term and very costly projects (such as Bureau of Public Roads, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation), had been successful in submitting detailed, long-range plans and budgets to Congress, Wirth decided that perhaps the National Park Service could get Congressional attention with this approach. After setting up steering and working committees, Wirth named the new long-term project Mission 66. The name reflected the emotion of the committee "who felt a sense of mission" and the fact that the 10-year project would end on the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service in 1966. Filled with excitement and drive, the committees got off to a very fast start. Wirth expected each park to respond to his call for its course of action by April 11. Wirth, knowing that Yellowstone's 20-year concession contracts would expire in 1955, believed this was the perfect time to make sure the park and the concessioners "would be in harmony."[1] Yellowstone Superintendent Edmund Rogers, Landscape Architect Mattson, Chief Ranger Otto Brown, and the Chief Naturalist Dave Condon, all went to Washington to meet with the committee and discuss in detail the current Yellowstone master plan.

In response to Wirth's call, Yellowstone submitted its current and future needs in a report which, in regards to concessions, covered the following points:

1. Development and circulation should be spread within the Park much along the present system of use with planned withdrawals from the immediate vicinity and scenic features.
2. New hotels shall not be proposed. Present hotels should be placed into disuse and ultimately removed as they deteriorate and become marginal in income.
3. The spread between hotel rooms and deluxe cottage rates and tourist cabins shall be closed with a medium-priced cabin room.
4. Room units should be provided preferably in multi-room structures in the most economical manner as regards to cost and use of ground in different classes, ranging from rooms with bath, toilet, and hot and cold water to unfurnished type with beds, sink and running cold water.
5. Expansion should be based upon visitor demand and on the part of the gateway communities to develop more overnight accommodations.
6. No new road locations proposed.
7. One trailer village for concession operations is proposed.
8. Recommended inviting other applicants to operate facilities on competitive bid basis to develop new facilities at specific sites.
9. Consider proposals to use house trailers as facilities for room rental.

10. A reservation system should be developed by concessioner.
11. Concessioner should institute experimental sightseeing tour service at reasonable rates. Drive-your-self cars and non-scheduled motor vehicle tours shall be admitted under existing regulations.

Under site development, the following were proposed:

Lake-Fishing Bridge

Remove the boating facilities at Lake Boat Dock, Fishing Bridge, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service. These facilities then to be provided at Bridge Bay.
Remove present trailer house camp from Fishing Bridge area. Provide new concessioner operating trailer village at new proposed site.
Retain and add as follows to existing developments:

Concessioners—hotels, cottages, lodge and cabins, cabins at Fishing Bridge, general store, eating places, photo shops, service stations, fuels, self-service laundry, garages, recreation halls, employees recreation center and boating.

Present capacity of Lake Hotel Cottage area—749, increase to 1,500 guests. Construct 150 medium class A cottage rooms, capacity 450. Provide several Class A housekeeping units in area.

Lake Lodge—rehabilitate and increase present capacity from 400 to 1,200 guests; rehabilitate 168 shelter cabin rooms, capacity 440; convert lodge dining room to cafeteria; construct 240 Medium Class C cabin rooms, capacity 720; construct helps dormitory.

Fishing Bridge—increase capacity to 1,200; rehabilitate present cabin rooms as maintenance to shelter cabins; construct 32 Medium Class C cabins rooms, capacity 96; construct new cafeteria and cabin office.

West Thumb

Working group suggests the Service abandon and remove present development at the junction of the present road within the thermal area. Develop only an orientation station at thermal area, self-service and manned. Develop new area, to be called Thumb Bay, on West Thumb Lake Shore, 1 1/2 miles south of present development, providing accommodations and rooms, capacity, 2,500; eating facilities—cafeteria, coffee shop, lunches, and refreshments; general store, service stations, fuels, garage, photo shop, boating dock and employee recreational center. The committee recommended this concession be opened to competition which would permit immediate action based upon the National Park Service being able to install the utilities.

Bridge Bay

Group considers this location a suitable site for installation of new overnight accommodations and the development of sheltered boating operations. The group suggested the concession be opened to competition which would permit immediate construction based upon National Park Service providing utilities. The new development would have a capacity for 1200 guests, cafeteria, coffee shop, general store, photo shop, service station, boat docks, and other needed service buildings.

Old Faithful

The Service should abandon [the area] because of intrusion upon present day use and overnight of concessioner and government facilities, in-

Bridge Bay. 1964.

cluding administration, services, and utilities moving these out of existing areas. Provide a new area, which is to be selected and to be known as Firehole, for development which shall provide overnight accommodations and rooms with a guest capacity of 3,500. (Never built) The area would include all of the usual accompanying services.

Tower Fall
Continue present development; relocate campground to vicinity of Tower Junction; enlarge Haynes Store as required.

Roosevelt
Increase guest capacity to 500 with new cabin rooms; rehabilitate present facilities of the lodge and cabin rooms; recommend consideration of this area for new concessioner.

Mammoth
Remove present National Park Service housing and concessioner buildings from foot of Mammoth Terrace; remove present store, service station and photo shop and construct a new plaza area; remove present tourist cabins and use in other areas (town of Gardiner could absorb some of slack).

Canyon
Remove present lodge and cabins, service building, tourist cabins, cafeteria service buildings, photo shop, general store, service station, ranger station from present location on rim of Canyon. Construct new facilities at new Canyon Village area as follows: cabin rooms, capacity 1500 (guest capacity can be increased to 2500 with new development); construct the other accompanying services; recommend consideration of trailer room rental at site.

The staff suggested that this plan would increase the guest capacity from 8,417 to 13,891 at an approximate cost (to the concessioner) of $13,654,000 for new construction and $721,200 for rehabilitation.[2] The plan was enthusiastically endorsed by all and became the basis for many decisions in Yellowstone from that point forward.

The Yellowstone Park Company's new 20-year contract was executed on February 3, 1956, which left little time to secure financing and initiate the building program by the April 1 deadline set in Section 2 of the contract. However, on March 30, the Yellowstone Park Company secured a loan of $3,000,000 from Security-First National Bank in Los Angeles. Work began on prefabricated cabins for Canyon at a facility in Gardiner by April 1, but excessive snow at Canyon delayed site work until May 25. On June 25, the Yellowstone Park Company directors held a special meeting in which it was announced "there had been a mistake of some $1,500,000 in the original estimate and the total [cost] would be $4,500,000." The Yellowstone Park Company Board of Directors decided to build only 200 motel-type units instead of 300, eliminate the recreation hall, reduce the size of the administration building, build only three dormitories and not build a main building. In August, the company made arrangements to obtain an additional $5 million loan, which led to the decision to construct more revenue-producing buildings (such as 500 motel-type units instead of the original 300) and to revise the plans for the administration building to a "lower scale." By the end of August, 300 motel-type units were almost finished, the three Yellowstone Park Company dormitories were almost completed, and the foundation for the administration building (visitor center) was almost finished. Work was scheduled to continue on the other 200 units, and they were expected to be 90 percent completed by December 1. The contract specified a final completion date of July 1, 1957.[3]

Mammoth Motor Inn cabin. 1951.

In late 1956, two of the major players in the park changed. John Q. Nichols, (son of William "Billie" Nichols) was named president of Yellowstone Park Company, with William "Billie" Nichols moving to chairman of the board, and Edmund Rogers was replaced by Lemuel Garrison as the park's new superintendent. Garrison had recently been the chairman of the Mission 66 steering committee in the Washington office.

Early in March 1956, Hamilton had submitted his plans for a new general store and dormitory in the Canyon Village area. Taking the superintendent's advice, he hired the same firms as the Yellowstone Park Company, Welton Beckett of Los Angeles as the architect and McNeil Construction as the contractor.[4] The following year, Hamilton became upset with the Yellowstone Park Company over the change in plans for the types of cabins that would be open at Canyon in July 1957. In writing to "Billie" Nichols, he stated "When I agreed to my most expensive building program at Canyon, it was with the understanding that you were going to have 200 shelters (economy cabins) and 300 new modern cabins." Now that there would be 500 modern cabins, Hamilton was worried about the lack of affordable cabins in the area, so he asked Nichols to relocate some tourist cabins from other areas to Canyon. He said he would not have spent nearly a million dollars on his new store if he had known the final plan.[5]

Nevertheless, the new Hamilton Store at Canyon Village opened on July 15, 1957. The total cost of the store and equipment was $650,000. The store, which had 12,000 square feet of retail space, had a modern fountain with seating capacity for 100 guests, a large self-service grocery area, additional areas for dry goods, clothing, gifts, souvenirs, drugs, and cigarettes. The building also contained warehouse space and five apartments for employees. The new dormitory, which was also completed by the middle of July, housed 100 employees and cost $250,000. The new service station, which opened on June 1, 1957, cost $99,000. The old Hamilton dormitory at Canyon was moved to Old Faithful for employee housing.[6]

Charles Hamilton died in his apartment at Old Faithful on May 28, 1957, just six weeks before the opening of the new store at Canyon. A few days later, Jack Haynes delivered a moving tribute to Charles Hamilton in the Mammoth Chapel, where Hamilton had married many years before. Haynes remembered many of Hamilton's generous works, including helping young people through school, but Hamilton always tried to cover up his good works. Haynes described him as "dedicated to his business, he was dedicated to the task of serving the visitors to Yellowstone National Park. He did that with greater zeal than anyone else I have ever known who had anything to do with business in the park." Haynes called him a "warm friend [who] tried to cover it up with that brusqueness we knew." He concluded by saying, "You [the group at the memorial service] and I will never again find a warmer, more sincere, honest and capable friend than Charles Ashworth Hamilton.[7] The park again lost one of its most colorful and interesting characters.

In the summer of 1958, Superintendent Garrison changed the long-standing practice of allowing concessioners to use hot water from the different springs in the park. Garrison notified the Yellowstone Park Company and Hamilton Stores that the use of Myriad Spring near Old Faithful would stop. He added, "The use is a contradiction of appropriate preservation of the park thermal resources and we wish to eliminate it as soon as practical the use of this water for domestic purposes." He went on to reveal his philosophy of park protection:

> You, of course, understand our objectives. Many of the practices of past years, although considered wise at the period they were first started, do not conform with the legislation governing the park and conflict very seriously with conservation policies. Therefore, we wish to correct every encroachment as soon as it is physically possible.[8]

Garrison's philosophy conflicted with some of the new revenue-raising ideas the Yellowstone Park Company was considering. For example, just before the season opened in 1958, the company approached a Billings, Montana, consulting firm regarding a study of the company's operations. The company wanted to find new ways to increase its revenue such as attracting visitors to the park in May and September and October for conventions and similar events. The company listed several ideas for the consulting firm to consider, including turning the Gardiner transportation buildings into a manufacturing plant for pre-fab cabins, leasing the transportation buildings to the National Park Service or another concessioner, using the "abundance of natural hot-water from the Mammoth Terraces" for a modern swimming pool with adjacent bar and buffet service (and possibly including a solarium and "pseudo beach" at the pool to attract sun bathers) offering late spring skiing on Mt. Washburn, building a golf course on Cascade Creek Meadows, and numerous other ideas.[9]

With the new Canyon Village opened to the public, the Yellowstone Park Company turned its thoughts to the fate of the Canyon Hotel. Superintendent Garrison realized that much of the building was beyond repair and considered certain portions dangerous, but he wondered if part of the hotel could be stabilized. One thought was to move the best portions to the Village area. However, it was decided to demolish the hotel the following year.[10]

During 1958, the question of employee trailer housing came up again. It was decided that employees who wanted to bring in 10-foot wide trailers had to have the District Ranger's permission, had to furnish a pilot car during transport, and could only move the trailer between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. during the pre- and post-seasons.[11]

In May 1958, all of the park concessioners agreed to hold regular business meetings with the superintendent from May through September to discuss pertinent issues. At the first meeting, it was decided to invest either the concessioner or the National Park Service with "complete operating jurisdiction" over the trailer situation. At the same meeting, Superintendent Garrison also expressed his hope that Roosevelt Lodge would be developed as a type of "dude ranch" center with horse activities and "various accoutrements" of such an operation.[12]

After reading the Yellowstone Park Company's annual report for 1958, Superintendent Garrison told the regional director that while the company's finances were not quite as dire as he had thought, there was certainly a problem. He did not think the company would have sufficient financing for the extensive Mission 66 construction program that the park needed, particularly funds for the Grant Village development. Garrison believed that this was a joint problem and supported a proposal by the company's lawyer, Hugh Galusha, for "full scale exploration of financing alternatives to be spearheaded by NPS to retain control, including bankers, financiers, hotel people, and concessioners." Garrison believed that the concessions should remain in the National Park Service's hands, because the park and the public welfare should be a higher priority than the prosperity of the concessioner. Garrison emphasized to the regional director that the Haynes and Hamilton operations were on sound footing.[13] In the meantime, the Yellowstone Park Company prepared a new plan, "Operation Bootstrap," which advised Director Wirth that the company was planning to resolve its financial troubles. With regard to the Mission 66, Hugh Galusha wanted to make certain it did not become "a concessioner's obituary."

Later that summer, the National Park Service hired a consulting firm to conduct a statistical survey to establish visitor preference for the different types of accommodations offered in the park. This study was timely in view of the proposed new development at Grant Village, just south of West Thumb. The analysis revealed that visitors from the surrounding states preferred the least expensive accommodations, while visitors from the rest of the country and those from foreign countries were willing to pay more. The results also indicated that families with two children came in greater numbers, and visitors between 35 and 64 were the most predominant visitor group. These results, in addition to other indicators, led the consulting firm to recommend that for every 100 cabins built, three should be the most basic cabin without toilet, water, or bedding and only a wood stove; 11 should have hot and cold running water, toilet, electric heat, and electric stove; 24 should have hot and cold running water, toilet, electric heat and stove, linen and bedding, and maid service; 16 should have hot and cold running water, electric heat and stove, maid service, linen and bedding, and a refrigerator; 38 should have hot and cold running water, electric heat, linen and bedding, maid service, shower, and no stove or refrigerator; and eight should have all of the conveniences except the wood stove.[14]

In 1959, Garrison sent the regional director the results of an informal park survey conducted done for a five-year period beginning in 1955. In 1955, 32 percent of the visitors preferred the campground to 48 percent in 1959; 30 percent of visitors preferred the camper's cabins in 1955 to 22 percent in 1959; 19 percent preferred the lodge area in both 1955 and 1959; 19 percent preferred the hotels in 1955 to 11 percent in 1959.[15]

In June 1959, the Yellowstone Park Company began plans for the demolition and salvage operation of the Canyon Hotel. Prior to awarding the contract, Trevor Povah requested permission to bid for some of the hotel chairs. (Just the month before, Charles A. Hamilton, founder of Hamilton Stores, died in his apartment at Old Faithful.[16]) In September, after deliberating about whether to move Canyon Hotel's newest wing to Lake for renovation (which they did not do), Carlos Construction Company of Cody was awarded the contract for demolition and salvage. For \$25, Carlos Construction Company bought Canyon Hotel and the rights to take 900 days to remove it after which the Yellowstone Park Company would be responsible for landscaping the site.[17]

Just before 1959 ended, the Yellowstone Park Company changed the name of its long-range plan from "Project Bootstrap" to "Roche Jaune." One interpretation of the name was given by company official, Thomas Hallin who wrote:

> The first commercial ventures in this remarkable area can be traced to the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Fur Company. Imagine a rendezvous of a French-Canadian entrepreneur and his voyagers at the mouth of the "Roche Jaune" as they sit around a council fire planning an expedition up this promising stream. The flickering illumination of the fire, the gray wisps of wood smoke drifting slowly skyward and the occasional mournful call of a coyote lend a mystic quality to the scene as these men rise to speak. Although their Gallic speech is supplemented by Indian dialects and sign language, it is clear that carefully laid plans are of paramount importance for their own survival in this wilderness as well as the success of the business undertaking. Thus, there is an analogy between this first entrepreneur and the present executives of the Yellowstone Park Company in that both face countless operational problems requiring the development of long-range programs. What could be more appropriate today than "Project Roche Jaune?"[18]

At the first meeting of the concessioners and Superintendent Garrison in 1960, several development issues were on the agenda, including a report that boat usage on Lake Yellowstone was up and the numbers of boats was continuing to increase. As a result of the ranger naturalists' studies of the lake area, it was decided to close the arms of the lake to motor boats and clean up the shoreline. A new dock for ranger use was scheduled to be built at Frank Island and a public campground would be built at Eagle Bay. In response to changes in the boating activities the park recommended, Haynes defended the park position in a letter to Hugh Galusha:

> Hugh, we employ the best talent available to determine policies and for the control and preservation of our national parks; and in fairness, we should heed any constructive ideas conceived by the experts who are devoting their lives to this task. I agree, however, that concessioners are not in position to take sides in this instance gracefully.[19]

Opinion also differed on the proposed layout for Grant Village. The Yellowstone Park Company's architect planned to consolidate all of the units while the National Park Service's Western Office of Design and Construction planned for the units to be spread out. Immediately, the park announced that this difference had to be reconciled as the National Park Service could freeze the master plan. Because about $2,000,000 would be spent on roads, utilities and campgrounds, it would be difficult to alter the plans later.

In addition to financial troubles, the concessioners were also jolted by the August 17, 1959, earthquake causing damage throughout the park, but heavily felt on the western side of the park and at Old Faithful in particular. The concessioners reported that Yellowstone Park Company had an "excellent season until the earthquake," but ended in the red; Hamilton Stores had a one-eighth of one percent increase in sales over 1958; and Haynes, while about 10 percent ahead of 1958 until the earthquake hit, ended the season about even.[20]

Just before the 1960 season opened, the Yellowstone Park Company held a meeting where major reorganizational changes were announced. The Yellowstone Park Company and the Child Corporation intended to merge, however, one beneficiary of the Child Trust would not go along with the merger unless some changes to the plan were made. As a result, all stockholders and beneficiaries decided to sell. Unfortunately, the next month, the company found out that the prospective buyer was not able to finalize the sale due to personal obligations. The company's bankers, the prospective buyer, and a neutral outsider believed that the company could be operated in a profitable manner, but only if some management changes were made. In the end, Huntley Child, Jr., resigned, leaving John Nichols as president with two vice presidents, Thomas Hallin in charge of the Operating Department and F. T. Burke in charge of the Auditing Department. The minutes of the meeting reflect the feelings of company management and set standards for the employees to meet:

> This is a good Company, and can be a prosper-

> ous Company, but it must go back to the thinking of Harry Child that the success of any service company is service—the main objective is serving the customer—as he is the most important and only indispensable person in Yellowstone Park. Each person working for this Company must have enthusiasm for service to the guest, and it is up to each department head to impart this enthusiasm to each employee in his department. This will make a successful Company, and it will work if each person will meet the challenge.[21]

Garrison supported the Yellowstone Park Company changes, and Galusha responded that "without the support and cooperation you have given us since your arrival in the Park, the strides that have been made in the last three years would not have been possible."[22]

In July 1960, a Housing Building Conference was held at Canyon Village at which the National Park Service, the concessioners, the architects and designers, the contractors, manufacturers, and trade associations discussed the problems of visitor housing in a national park. Former park landscape architect, Sanford "Red" Hill, who was currently chief of the Western Office of Design and Construction, reiterated the difficulty of coordinating yearly appropriations for agency development work with the spiraling high costs of construction, brief building and operating seasons, isolated building sites, and private financial investments.

In August 1960, the Canyon Hotel mysteriously burned after being condemned for foundation damage and sold to a salvage company for $25. A Cheyenne, Wyoming, newspaper described it as "The Great Lady was outraged. She could not, she would not, accept the indignity of laborious, prolonged, and piecemeal destruction. She chose sudden death."[23]

Canyon Hotel fire. 1960.

By 1961, Director Wirth was being criticized for the development portion of his Mission 66 program. This prompted him to reassess the program at its midterm in a letter to Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. Wirth defended the 10-year development and conservation plan:

> Development is beginning to come abreast of the need. The second stage will see greater action in the completion of a truly adequate and representative National Park System, more emphasis on research to provide the facts upon which a more vigorous preservation program must be based, and the strengthening and broadening of park interpretation so as to bring out to the fullest measure the true social, educational, cultural, and patriotic values of the System.[24]

Wirth pointed out that in most parks, about 99 percent of park use occurred on 1 to 5 percent of the total park land. He described the developed areas as the "zones of civilization" in a wilderness setting and pointed out that most park visitors do not get far away from the road corridor or developed areas. He called for the architects "to keep all plans as simple as possible so that buildings will not in themselves be an attraction, and to cost as little as possible. Construction, however, must be durable and attractive."[25] He called the management of a park "tremendously complex requiring much adjustment between types of areas preserved,…helping to preserve the balance of nature in those portions of the parks most affected by man, and adjusting to the political realism of serving many elements within our society."[26]

Udall responded to Wirth's letter, noting that "these wild areas are available to those who will make the small effort necessary to reach out from the road ends and away from the parking areas." In discussing the proposed National Wilderness System, he stated that by using the Wilderness Act standards "at least 98 percent of park lands will qualify as wilderness." While being a strong proponent of wilderness preservation, he was opposed to the people calling the park visitor "invading locusts," "tin can tourists," or "invading hordes." Udall called upon National Park Service interpretive services to assist in educating visitors on conservation by stimulating their interests in "inspiring surroundings." He was convinced that part of the answer lay in the expansion of the nation's recreation program, which also might "solv[e] the problem of passing the National Park System on unimpaired to future generations."[27]

In November 1962, George Beall, the former general manager of the Del E. Webb Hotel Company in Phoenix with 30 years of hotel experience, joined the Yellowstone Park Company as general manager.[28] One year later, he presented Superintendent Garrison with a five-year improvement and maintenance program. A budget of $450,000 listed $350,000 as having been spent on improvements and $100,000 on maintenance. The priority improvements were: Fishing Bridge—repainting 112 cabins, new furniture for 321 cabins, and 40 new cabins to be relocated from Canyon Lodge; Old Faithful Inn—new furniture, 50 new baths, and investigate need to rewire Inn; Lake Hotel—new furniture for 100 rooms, 50 new baths, and investigate wiring needs; Lake Lodge—repaint 86 cabins and new furniture for 86 cabins; and finally Canyon Village—repaint 100 units and remodel one block of units to test sound proofing. Other desirable improvements included West Thumb—relocate 21 cabins from Canyon Lodge to replace deteriorated cabins and recommend that West Thumb be abandoned in three years with the move to Grant Village beginning in 1966; Old Faithful Lodge—move three dormitories from the old Canyon Lodge area for employee housing and paint 50 cabins; Old Faithful Campers Cabins—some repair and maintenance work such as exterior painting and roof and step repairs; Roosevelt Lodge—install water and toilets for 15 cabins and consider relocating 12 cabins within area to improve appearance and relieve crowded conditions; Mammoth Hotel and Cottages—50 new baths and new furniture for 100 rooms (this was a lower priority than other areas). The park recommended that the company spend $20,000 to modernize comfort stations, including combining toilet, shower, and laundry facilities into a single unit.[29]

In June 1962, Jack Haynes died. His wife, Isabel Haynes, then took over as president of Haynes, Inc. Later, toward the end of 1967, Mrs. Haynes negotiated with Hamilton Stores to sell the Haynes's business in the park. Director George Hartzog, Jr., approved the sale with two stipulations: "Hamilton Stores would agree to sell merchandise to the Yellowstone Park Company for retail sales at its outlets at

Old Faithful Inn bedroom. 1968.

Hamilton's cost, plus a reasonable surcharge for handling and that following the expiration of the remaining term of Haynes's contract it will not be renewed and the preferential right privileges now included in Haynes contract will terminate." Hartzog praised Jack Haynes and his father for their contributions to Yellowstone National Park and suggested to Mrs. Haynes that she donate the Haynes Shop at Mammoth to the National Park Service "so that an attractive, interesting display of the Haynes collection may be made available to park visitors." However, this never happened.[30]

After several years of supporting the Yellowstone Park Company through its financial woes, Superintendent Garrison finally lost patience after the newly appointed general manager let the service deteriorate to an unacceptable level. In a strongly worded letter to George Beall, he emphasized his displeasure and told him that it was up to him straighten things out. He ended his letter by stating, "Actually it is doubtful if your operation could survive without the protecting umbrella of the franchise. We look to a fresh, alert, alive, progressive program of operations improvements to keep pace with the plant improvements being achieved. Both are needed—how can we help you achieve them?"[31]

In addition to its drop in standards, inefficiency, a lack of customer service, and a disregard for environmental issues, the Yellowstone Park Company obviously could not keep up with the Mission 66 program. Director Wirth appointed a committee to develop a plan for Yellowstone with a particular emphasis on concession operations. Wirth and the Secretary's office considered the Yellowstone situation the most serious in the Service. The Yellowstone Park Company welcomed the study, which would also involve the expertise of economists and hotel professionals who were to arrive at a method of "achieving our overall objective of use and preservation."[32]

In a more cordial letter to John Nichols, Superintendent Garrison reviewed the successful history of the company in Yellowstone, but pointed out that "many of the Company's operating patterns and procedures that were suitable in bygone years are outmoded today.…it is frankly suggested that real top-flight men be located and employed to take over the food and hotel services." Garrison recommended that the best possible people be hired, writing "we simply state such men will be worth what they may cost and if they are cheap, you do not want them."[33]

In June 1963, the dedication of Grant Village took place with General U.S. Grant III, grandson of the president, in attendance. Only the first phase of development had been completed by the National Park Service: the 383-unit campground, 15 group campsites, a picnic area, boat launching ramp, and 180-car capacity parking lot.[34] In 1964, the dredging of the marina and construction of the bulkheads were completed; the docks would be built in 1965. The plans called for a dock that could handle 164 boats of varying lengths (up to a maximum length of 32 feet). Boat rentals, guide services, tackle, and equipment would be handled by the Yellowstone Park Company.[35]

By 1964, the new National Park Service plan for Yellowstone was called "Road to the Future" with a special emphasis on providing services for increased visitation while at the same time moving development as far away as possible from natural features. Day-use areas were proposed for Fishing Bridge, Old Faithful, and Mammoth. The concessioners knew that if this happened they would soon be receiving complaints, particularly about Old Faithful.[36]

In trying to placate the concessioners, Superintendent Garrison's replacement, John McLaughlin, told the concessioners that the park was already receiving complaints, not about prices, etc., but about the attitude of park employees. A special investigator was in the park studying the complaints and attitudes of the park employees. He urged the concessioners to encourage people to give their complaints to the rangers so any necessary action could be taken at the local level. He also told them "the Director of the National Park Service had come and gone; the Master Planning Committee had also come and gone, and that they have had a Staff Committee from Washington and the regional office who seek a long look at their organization here in the Park" in their efforts to streamline the organization.[37]

The next year the Yellowstone Park Company also experienced personnel changes. Chairman of the

Grant Village marina. 1960s.

Board Herrick Low resigned; George Beall went on a leave of absence, and Art Bazata was appointed executive vice president and general manager.[38] However, management changes did not turn company into a desirable investment in 1965. At the end of the summer, the company presented McLaughlin with its revised program as well as proposed improvements and also a review of its projects from October 1, 1955, to September 30, 1964. In June, Newell Gough, Jr., a member of the Yellowstone Park Company's Executive Board, wrote to Director Hartzog about the proposed development at Grant Village, which the Service now predicted to cost about six million dollars. Gough stated that the company management thought the immediate development of 400 motel units, 300 cabins, dormitory space for 200 employees, food facilities, and related construction would exceed seven million dollars. He noted that in the past eight years, the company had paid architects, engineers, and other consultants many thousands of dollars to examine the "economic feasibility and the potential of Grant Village." He explained to Hartzog that the company had had "an understanding with the former Director that this construction would be [done] on a step-by-step basis" due to the many unknown factors such as visitor use patterns (the site was off the main loop road), weather patterns, the relationship of this facility with the fishing season, and other factors. He said that the company was:

> Ready and willing to commit two and a half million dollars to an initial phase of this project but would have to have a new 30 year contract before starting. It was the result of our study (and at one time we thought this result had been concurred in by the Service) that an investment of a greater sum would not be economically feasible. This, we understand, is the test of construction requirements under our contract. As a practical matter, unless it is economically feasible, the construction capital cannot be secured from any source, whether we went into equity financing or attempted to borrow the money. Therefore, most reluctantly, and without waiving any of its rights, the Yellowstone Park Company must inform you that it is unable to comply with the Park Service construction program at Grant Village as set out by you in our recent meeting.[39]

During the previous 10-year period, the company had spent $8,356,831 on new facilities and $1,937,296 on repairs to buildings and equipment. During the first eight months of 1965, the company spent $772,317 on capital improvements and repair and maintenance with the authorization to spend an additional $324,000 for more repairs and maintenance. However, by December, the National Park Service faced the uncertainty of the company's future. The company had been for sale for the past several years, but it appeared that no qualified buyers could be found. The National Park Service was faced with examining alternatives for developing Grant Village if the Yellowstone Park Company could not meet its obligations.[40]

In the spring of 1966, the final year in the Mission 66 program, the Yellowstone Park Company was sold to the Goldfield Corporation. A few months later, Goldfield sold its tourism interests, including the Yellowstone Park Company and the Everglades National Park Company, to General Baking, which became General Host, Inc. in 1967. A former Yellowstone Park Company official, Art Bazata, remained as president for the Yellowstone division. As part of the government contract with General Host, Inc., the company agreed to invest a minimum of $10,000,000 by December 1975 or its 30-year contract would terminate. At the end of December 1975, the company had not met its commitment, but it was given a two-year extension pending further study. The study team investigating the concession contract recommended in 1976 that the contract be terminated, and the former Yellowstone Park Company was sold to the United States government for 19.9 million dollars. The operation of the concessions was then awarded to TWA Services in November 1979 on a two-year interim contract, after which they were awarded a 10-year contract (November 1, 1981, to October 31, 1991, and followed by another 10-year contract covering November 1, 1991, to October 31, 2001). As part of the first 10-year contract, 22 percent of the company's gross revenue, in addition to all pre-tax profits over five percent was to be spent on capital improvements and repair and maintenance of the concession buildings.[41]

The following 1,418 buildings belonged to the Yellowstone Park Company just prior to its sale to the Goldfield Corporation:

Gardiner—21
general repair shop
storage garage
commissary & warehouse
mens' dormitory
power house
3 residences
duplex
12 other misc. bldgs.

Mammoth—127
hotel
dining room
recreation hall
boys' dormitory & laundry
girls' dormitory
mens' dormitory
repair garage
barn
ice vendor
118 cabins & other bldgs.

Norris—1
1 residence

Riverside—7
(obliterated 7 bldgs.)

Canyon Village—96
lodge
3 dormitories
ice vendor
67 multi-units (508 rooms)
23 new cabins (100 rooms)
1 linen room

Old Canyon Hotel area—4
winterkeeper's house
horse barn
wranglers' bunkhouse
horse rental office
(obliterated—old mess house, bull pen, tin shed and 19 other bldgs.)

Lake Hotel—97
hotel
boiler room
girls' dorm
boys' dorm
2 bus drivers' dorms
ice plant-boys' dorm
winter power plant
winterkeeper's house
84 cabins
boat storage shed
boat repair bldg.
boat residence

Lake Lodge—198
lodge
laundry
2 dorms
power plant
winterkeeper house
186 rooms-cabins
3 other bldgs.
3 restrooms

Fishing Bridge—323
cafeteria
office
boiler room
boys' dorm
3 storage rooms
9 restrooms
305 cabins
recreation bldg.
ice vendor

Roosevelt—122
lodge
power plant
restrooms
horse barn
89 cabins
21 employee cabins
2 storage sheds
wood shed

Old Faithful Lodge—169
lodge
boys' dorm
2 girls' dorms
2 residences
power plant
162 cabins & other bldgs.

Old Faithful Inn—14
Inn
power plant
plumbing shop
carpenter shop
paint shop
girls' dorm
boys' dorm

Old Faithful Campers' Cabins—240
234 cabins
cabin office
cafeteria
power plant
laundry—self service
ice vendor
"H" dorm—removed
bus compound—removed
mess house—removed
garage—removed
horse barn—removed
fire wood shed—removed
2 mens' dorms
wash room
laundry repair shop
2 residences
horse ride office

West Thumb—190
All YP Company 190 buildings been removed from West Thumb: cabins, office building, recreation building, cafeteria, garbage room, ice vendor and boat house.[42]

In September 1975, an accounting of the park cabins indicated that 64 Lake Lodge cabins were removed in 1967 and nine in 1975; 114 campers cabins were removed from Old Faithful area in 1970, and 37 Fishing Bridge cabins were removed in 1974.[43]

Following purchase by the National Park Service, the new concessioner, TWA Services, now known as Xanterra, has made extensive improvements to the facilities.

In just over 100 years, the manner in which the National Park Service interprets Yellowstone's mandate "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people," has changed tremendously, just as other aspects of the National Park Service mission have changed. During earliest Yellowstone days, the concessioners, for the most part, offered the most stability at the park. The secretaries of the Interior, with very few exceptions, paid little attention to the park and certainly did not invest financially in its protection or interpretation. The constant turnover in the Secretary's office did not allow for development of a concession policy; thus, for many years directions were not consistent. After the turn of the century, more attention was paid to the parks, but it was not until the creation of the National Park Service under the guidance of Stephen Mather and Horace Albright that a systematic approach was brought to the policies that affected concessioners.

Despite the fact that the major goal of the concessioners as businessmen was to make a profit and that one of the goals of park management was to protect the park, they both were joined in the goal of "providing for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." For many decades the relationships between the concessioners and park managers were of a personal nature. As the government bureaucracy grew, the relationship became less personal, and tensions increased. This became particularly apparent after the creation of the National Park Service regional office in the 1930s.

The one constant aspect in the last hundred years has been the salient role of politics. Both concessioners and the park accomplished more when both concession officials and National Park Service managers were adroit and consummate politicians. However, just as National Park Service managers can sometimes be subject to the whim of politics and social trends, the concessioners over the years often became vulnerable. In addition to political whims, the concessioners have faced uncertainties and impacts of changes in visitor use patterns brought about by such things as travel by horse to travel by auto; the popularity of hotels giving way to cabins, camping and lodges, and then back to hotels, World War I; the Depression; World War II; the Korean conflict; and the extensive expansion of development spurred by the Mission 66 program. In addition, both the park and its concessioners have been affected by the rise in the environmental movement of the last 20 years. The recognition of impacts that developed areas have on natural resources has prompted many changes.

When one compares the appearance of the park today, particularly of its developed areas, with scenes of the past (even in the 1950s), one cannot help but notice that the difference is astounding. The concession areas appear more manicured and tidy; gone are the shacks, sheds, fences, and debris. Some of the improvements can be attributed to either master planning or environmental awareness, but more can be attributed to the park's and concessioners' response to visitor expectations. The history of concessions development in Yellowstone National Park has, after all, been driven by what the visitor wanted, needed, and expected.