

War-Time Rationing to Post-War Scarcity 1942–1949

While the first two years of the 1940s were generally good years for park concessioners, the growing crisis in Europe and the Far East signaled the approach of another troubled period for them. The concessioners could anticipate a dramatic drop in visitation if war started. They also knew their building program would be hampered by an insufficient labor force and shortages in materials, tires, and gasoline. But, they could not anticipate the National Park Service's response to the national crisis.

Selective Service registration for men who had reached the age of 21 by October 17, 1940, began in the park in July 1941. One hundred fifty-three men registered at Mammoth, Old Faithful, Lake, and Canyon. The following year, 239 men enlisted during registration, and some park employees in isolated areas registered by telephone or radio with Wyoming Selective Service offices.

At the end of December 1941, after America's entry into the war, the rationing of vehicle tires began across the country; the following month, a rationing board was created in the park. Tire rationing was followed a few months later by sugar rationing.¹

William Nichols, hotel and transportation companies president, began in 1942 trying to be optimistic. In a letter to his park construction manager, B. O. Hallin, Nichols wrote, "It is too early now, of course, to say what we can do in the way of construction for next summer. It all depends on what kind of a season we can anticipate and I may not know the answer until May. If the War situation does not get too acute, I think we should have a pretty good season."² Nichols

began plans for completing the cabin construction behind Lake Hotel and relocating and remodeling the Lake Lodge cabins to the Fishing Bridge area. He had hoped to complete improvements at Fishing Bridge that year and to bring the area up to the same standard as the Old Faithful area. He knew that labor would be a problem, and indeed it was when the Army began construction of a camp for 30,000 men near Henrys Lake, in Idaho. This project's better pay lured away some of the best park and concession employees. Other park workers were attracted to the construction of the Heart Mountain Relocation Project near Cody, Wyoming. Nichols also knew that he probably needed to place an order early for plywood and lumber with Monarch Lumber Company in Bozeman for a May delivery before the Navy and Army placed a priority claim on these materials.³



Lake cabins. n.d.

In February 1942, the National Park Service approved plans with some modifications, for the new cabin layouts at Lake Lodge, the Mammoth house-keeping area, and West Thumb. The Safety Division requested spacing of 20 feet between single cabins, 30 feet between double cabins, and water lines for fire protection in each development. For the West Thumb development, the Branch of Forestry expressed concern about the “conservation of the fine growth of spruce in the area” and requested an onsite study of the area.⁴ In response to a query by the Chief of Park Operators Division about the types of cabins in each park, Yellowstone came up with 44 different types of cabins.⁵

In the early spring, the operators began to sort out what parts of their operations should open for the season. In assessing the “increasing seriousness of the war situation and the definite influence on Park travel,” Anna Pryor proposed to close her auto camp (present campground) cafeteria and grocery store and open only the coffee shop and general store at Mammoth. This was approved by the Director.⁶ In April, the Director issued guidance to the operators about services they must provide for the public:

Because of the war situation and the incidental unpredictable volume of business, the probability of rapidly changing costs, and the difficulty of securing materials and supplies to maintain proper standards of service furnished by the operators for the accommodation of the public in the national park areas during the coming season, unusual authority must be vested in local administrative officials during the war period. Authority, therefore, is hereby given to the superintendents . . . to discontinue, curtail, or extend the various authorized accommodations and services of park operators. Authority is also given to the superintendents to revise upward or downward all park operators’ rates, except those approved for housing and bus transportation . . . This memorandum does not apply to the established fees for automobile licenses, or for entering national park areas.⁷

In May, the Office of Defense Transportation (ODT) issued General Order 10, affecting rail and bus transportation across the country. The National Park Service interpreted the order “to mean that Park bus

operations between railhead[s] and hotels in the Parks are not prohibited and such types of operation does not fall within the Order’s definition of either charter or sight-seeing service.” With trains carrying mostly war material, the Northern Pacific Railroad was limited in the numbers of passenger cars it could attach to trains. Early in the season, the Northern Pacific Railroad planned to serve Gardiner, Cody, and, if the number of travelers justified it, provide an extra car to Billings and Red Lodge; one car was planned from Seattle to Gardiner. However, the railroad was quite concerned with the mixed messages it received from the different government departments about publicity on travel and also on the openings of parks across the country.⁸

Acting National Park Service Director Arthur Demaray informed the Northern Pacific Railroad on June 2 that the National Park Service did not intend to issue any special notice about whether the parks would be open for the season. General Passenger Agent Goodsill found the “attitude taken by the ODT and NPS is so negative that the situation is bad, and a pall has been smothering over the travel market, which is unprecedented and the results are unpredictable.” Goodsill believed that the National Park Service’s “hands are tied and they are subordinate to the war-emergency bureau of the ODT” and they can’t publicly say “everybody come out and enjoy the parks” at this particular time. Goodsill urged Nichols to “cut down to skeleton staffs everywhere and not open any units not absolutely necessary. Also get ready to close some, if travel is meager.”⁹

The Office of Defense Transportation General Order 10 affected chartered bus tours to the parks, but some companies quickly reorganized by providing auto tours with escorts. It seemed to Northern Pacific Railroad officials that Yellowstone was still a popular destination point. In early summer many continued to hope that western states might get some relief from gas rationing and that rail traffic might provide some visitors. However, the Northern Pacific Railroad’s general passenger agent believed, “Adding all favorable factors and setting the total against the unfavorable ones, still leaves a poor season in prospect, with every reason [to believe] that the Yellowstone Park Company needs to cut everything to the bone.”¹⁰

Government price-freezing regulations, which would affect the concessioners, came out in June. The freeze did not apply to “meal prices where the foods or beverages are prepared and sold for consumption

on the premises,” nor did it apply “to perishable products such as eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables.” The regulations stipulated that the highest price charged in March 1942 would be the base price. The National Park Service recognized that many isolated parks were not operating in March and thus an exception to the general regulation provided that “the highest price charged during such months by the most closely competitive seller of the same class for the same commodity or services or if no charge was made for the same commodity or service then for the similar commodity or service most nearly like it, would apply.”¹¹

On June 14, National Park Service Director Drury released a statement on national parks and monuments. He stated that the service would be flexible in order to meet the changing needs “of adapting all civilian activities to the furthering of the winning of the war.” At that point overall visitation was half of what it had been at the previous time in 1941. Drury mentioned that in “Yellowstone National Park, for instance, the hotels now are about ready for opening, with nearly 1,000 summer employees on the company’s payroll. Unless the demand later on justifies reversal of the present plan, the lodges will not be opened; but the hotels will handle those visitors who ordinarily would patronize the lodges, at comparable rates.” He elaborated on General Order 10 and announced that sightseeing tours in the parks would be eliminated as they are in the “luxury class and not an integral part of transportation from the visitor’s home to the park.” He found the Order’s exclusion of the National Park Service “not entirely an unmixed hardship.” Noting that most of the “choicest portions of the wilderness parks often are off the automobile roads, reached by trail,” he advised the public that saddle horses were available and stated, “Family type vacations, with longer stays at a given location, should lead to increased horseback riding and hiking.” Director Drury noted that overall visitation was down, but that visitation by members of the armed forces had increased and that their entrance fees had been waived. In many cases, the concessioners offered special rates for men in uniform. Director Drury ended his release by stating that he believed:

in wartime the need for maintaining unimpaired the scenic national parks and the great national historic shrines is more imperative than ever before. Even were there no travel to them, it would be important that they be guarded as an

intrinsic unit of our total national treasure, for use and enjoyment after the war.¹²

In mid-July of 1942, the general manager of the Hamilton Stores, Gar Helppie, requested and received permission to close the gas stations at Old Faithful auto camp as soon as the gas supply was exhausted.¹³

Old Faithful, Mammoth, and Canyon hotels and the Mammoth cottages closed on August 27 as did all park transportation. The Old Faithful and Fishing Bridge cabins and cafeterias remained open until September 10, and, as usual, C. A. Hamilton agreed to furnish lodging and meals at Lake and Old Faithful until the middle of October or as long as travel continued. In August 1942, the Weather Bureau service closed at Mammoth after operating there for 39 years and relocated to West Yellowstone.¹⁴

Late in 1942, the concessioners were advised that the military was interested in leasing different resort-type facilities across the country for use as rest centers. Each park reviewed the military’s requests. Because Yellowstone was not available year-round, it was ultimately not considered for the program.¹⁵

By the end of 1942, rumors were rampant that Lake Hotel was going to be demolished. These rumors had spread to area salvage companies, who naturally wanted to bid on the rumored demolition project, but the superintendent could not confirm the rumor.¹⁶

Visitation had dropped from a high in 1941 of 581,761 tourists to 191,830 in 1942, prompting a grim prediction for the 1943 season. (In fact, only 64,144 people visited Yellowstone in 1943.) None of the hotels, lodges, or cafeterias was scheduled to open in 1943, and the park buses were not scheduled to run. The park made plans to accommodate only visitors from nearby areas who had the gas and tire rations to



Fishing Bridge cafeteria. 1929.

come to the park as well as any cross-country travelers moving to new assignments (such as armed forces members and their families or people involved in war work). There was no promotion of travel to the park, and the operators were asked to provide only limited services. Tourist cabins were opened at Fishing Bridge and Old Faithful, and Hamilton again provided meals and took in guests at both Old Faithful and Fishing Bridge. Pryor's coffee shop at Mammoth served meals and provided some overnight accommodations. Superintendent Rogers noted that the smaller operators might "be able to meet expenses through their curtailed operations," but "the Yellowstone Park Company would take a heavy loss this War year due to its tremendous investments."¹⁷

As part of the war effort, scrap iron drives were initiated in the park in 1943, and the Yellowstone Park Company sold 268,990 pounds of scrap, plus 15 tons of rails and dollies to Murray Baum of Ashton, Idaho.¹⁸

In March 1943, Jack Haynes visited local citizens and discussed the possibility of the park not opening for the 1943 season. He reported to Director Drury:

Under present conditions, I think that no one would be surprised if the park was not opened at all this summer. He went on to say that if in the interest of conservation of rubber, gasoline, food and man power the National Park Service decided not to open the park, there might be some people who would complain, but the National Park Service is strong enough to absorb those complaints easily because its action would be in line with the all out war effort which seems to be essential to winning the war.¹⁹

Haynes found that some Bozeman and Livingston citizens to have the same attitude. He told Drury, "I am gratified to learn that the National Park Service stands high in the esteem of these neighbors." Haynes offered to open with a skeleton crew wherever he was needed, knowing that he was "going to lose money anyway, and it's just a matter of degree." He wrote Director Drury that he had told Superintendent Rogers in 1942 that "the thing to do was to board up the park entrances until the war is won."²⁰

Prior to the 1943 season opening, Hamilton requested a slight increase in room rates and meals in order to cover his fixed costs. He reported that he had to pay maids \$90 a month and had other fixed expenses such as gasoline, lights, linen, and fuel. He

added that he probably would not be able to take on any more guests than he had in the past.²¹ Hamilton was also concerned about gasoline delivery from Continental Oil Company and suggested to William Nichols that Yellowstone Park Company rent one of its tanker trucks on a mileage basis to deliver needed gas. Hamilton estimated that he had enough canned goods to supply his winterkeepers, and he would find a way to secure perishables because he did not think the vegetable peddler, Happy Lyman, or Wilcoxson Dairy, or the bakery would make deliveries to the park. Finally, Hamilton said it was difficult to plan for opening by April 11, as he did not know when power would be on at Old Faithful and Fishing Bridge.²²

In June, Director Drury issued a statement on available public facilities in the national parks during the 1943 season. Drury stated that the national emergency would cause some functions to be curtailed, but "the responsibility for the administration and protection of the national park areas has not been reduced or materially changed because of the war." He also stated that a sufficient force was maintained in the parks "to protect it adequately and to keep the park and monuments open." Public campgrounds and museums would be open and naturalist services would be offered on a limited schedule. He advised visitors that since the concessioners had to abide by the same OPA rules regarding meals and housing ceilings and food rationing, visitors should bring their ration books if they planned to be in the park for a lengthy stay.²³

Despite the grim times, there were many instances of humor. For example, early in 1944, Hamilton, still at his home in California, wrote to park officials, Joe Joffe and Fred Johnston, stating that due to a shortage in points, the one government board "placed him on a pork diet" during the summer of 1943. He suggested to Joffe that if he was still on pork rations in 1944, he might substitute with buffalo!²⁴

At the beginning of 1944, however, Hamilton was worried as he had not received even one application for employment for the upcoming season. And, as time moved closer to the opening date, Hamilton reviewed his stock remaining from the previous year. He noted that souvenirs and curios did not sell well, but candy, gum, cigars, Pendleton shirts, hunting knives, liquor, and beer sold very quickly. He still had a sufficient stock of canned goods for the season, but would probably have to purchase 10 to 15 sacks of sugar.²⁵

Hamilton suggested to Superintendent Rogers



Haynes Photo Shop. 1951.

that because gasoline rations were cut to two gallons per week, perhaps the upper portion of the park should be closed for the season, and he advised putting barriers across the road at Madison Junction and Norris. He informed Rogers that if the geyser basin and Lake/Fishing Bridge were open, he would want to be at his business to prevent theft. Citing previous thefts at closed facilities, including the old Fountain Hotel, Hamilton suggested that he would even remain as a “watchman” until the winterkeeper returned in the fall.²⁶ When it was announced that Fishing Bridge and Old Faithful would be open to the public, Hamilton responded, “Was hoping the poles would remain across the roads at Madison Junction and Norris and that my ‘40th’ summer would be confined to fishing. My first entrance into the Park was the spring 1905.”²⁷

After a meeting in Chicago with the National Park Service Director Drury, Edmund Rogers announced that Hamilton would operate the Old Faithful store, but no cabins would be opened; the stores and cabins would be opened at Fishing Bridge; and Anna Pryor would operate her coffee shop at Mammoth.²⁸ Hamilton experienced an unexpected increase in the number of visitors at Old Faithful in late May, three times more than the 1943 numbers. He urged the government to turn on the power at the campground because he was being overrun with visitors wanting to use his washrooms.²⁹ As the summer progressed, Hamilton began to need meat, cheese, and butter, but he kept a good attitude, “No one will fight his war game harder than myself but the picture is getting impossible.”³⁰ Jack Haynes, who planned to open only his stores at Old Faithful and Mammoth, presented a positive attitude to Superintendent Rogers, “Please be assured, however, that if further operations are re-



Hamilton's Upper Geyser Basin Store. 1951.

quired, we will be glad to comply.”³¹

Despite another poor year for the concessioners, Mr. Hamilton continued to be very generous. He again led the donations in the park’s Loan Drive (its fifth), by buying a Series G Bond for \$10,000. (The park quota for 1944 was \$28,400.³²) He also purchased a Hammond organ for the chapel in Mammoth as a remembrance of the silver anniversary of his marriage there on September 20, 1920. In remitting a second check to Rogers for the balance on the organ, Hamilton noted, “I enclose herewith a check for \$202 in order that our little clan may chant hymns on Easter and pray for a wayward soul.” The purchase of an organ during wartime was not an easy task. Organs could be sold only to churches and educational institutions and not to private homes or night clubs. Superintendent Rogers, who lived in Denver, arranged for the purchase through the Wells Music Store, with an allotment for only three during the first quarter of 1945. Hamilton paid \$1,702 for the organ.³³

At the beginning of 1945, the concessioners predicted a very grim season indeed. Nichols wrote to Superintendent Rogers in January recommending that with the “extreme man-power shortage and the evident feeling in Washington and around the country that non-essential industries should be discouraged,” and no accommodations should be offered in the park during 1945. He pointed out that if the park was not so isolated or if it was near a military installation, then it would be able to offer rest and recreation to soldiers. However, because of the restricted rationing of gasoline and tires, the continued restrictions on rail and bus travel, and the shortage of labor, “the National Park Service should receive credit for being realistic over the situation in advising the public that on ac-

count of war restrictions, there will be no accommodations for visitors in Yellowstone National Park next summer.” Haynes agreed with Nichols up to a point, but because he had had 25 percent more business in 1944 than in 1943, he was not sure the park should be totally closed. His position was slightly different from that of the concessioners who provided accommodations and served meals. He pointed out to Nichols that he was allotted so much film each year, and, if he did not open, he would lose his allotment. As Haynes saw it, even the minimal amount of sales helped offset the fixed depreciation he took on his park properties. Because these depreciations would happen whether he was opened or closed, he believed (“being too old to help with the war very much”) he might as well stay open and continue “plodding along as usual.” He told Nichols that he would speak to Superintendent Rogers about the plight of the concessioners who provided accommodations. Evidently, the fact that Hamilton did not want to open in 1945 really surprised Jack Haynes. In a letter to Nichols, he wrote, “It is hard for me to imagine CAH [Hamilton] not wanting to open up, considering the volume of business he did in 1943 and 1944, but I’m not too old to learn a lot!”³⁴

Director Drury did not agree with Nichols and called for the same level of services as was available in 1944.³⁵ In fact, almost 13 percent (10,898) of the visitors to the park in 1944 were military men.³⁶ Before the end of the season the war was over, and Director Drury issued the following remarks to the concessioners:

Now that the war has ended, there will undoubtedly be a considerable immediate increase in travel to areas administered by the Service. Accordingly, our concessioners should be urged to make every effort to meet the demands of the public for meals, lodging, transportation, and other public service facilities insofar as they can within the manpower and other limitations which may still be imposed upon them. I believe, too, that the concessioners in the park areas normally closed in early winter should be asked to keep their public facilities open as long as possible this year, if justified by public demands for accommodations, as I feel sure that there will be many who will desire to visit those areas this year after the normal travel season, as we know it before the war, ends.

Park concessioners should also be urged to begin planning for the necessary rehabilitation of their public service facilities so that they may be placed in good condition at the beginning of the busy season next year.³⁷

In late September, Director Drury wrote to Nichols acknowledging his letter describing the increased visitation toward the end of the season. Drury noted that upon the release of gasoline rationing, Mount Rainier experienced an all-time record high for the first Sunday in September. He stated that he would shortly call a conference of the concessioners to discuss problems and to plan for the rush on the parks expected for 1946.³⁸

By the end of the 1945 season, Yellowstone’s visitation was 178,296 people, an increase of 108 percent over the 1944 total of 85,347. Superintendent Rogers noted that even with an increase of gasoline rationing in the early summer, the park experienced an increase in visitation as war workers shifted to the West Coast after the European war ended. Visitation for the year was up 56.4 percent prior to V-J Day, with another big surge after V-J Day.³⁹

After several years of falling visitation during the war, no one could have anticipated the dramatic increase in visitors to Yellowstone in 1946. During May and June alone, 199,390 people came through the entrance stations! During the war years, the concessioners probably dreamed of the days when huge numbers of tourists flooded the park, but with post-war labor problems, continued scarcity of materials, and the general deteriorated condition of park facilities, they incurred an unprecedented nightmare.⁴⁰

The lodges and hotels, which had been closed, needed extensive repairs, and it was impossible to open them by the time visitors started to arrive in 1946. A lumber shortage prevented early construction, and consideration was given to tearing down buildings around the Mammoth Lodge area to secure the needed material. Because Monarch Lumber Company in Bozeman could not furnish the needed supplies, Yellowstone Park Company construction manager B. O. Hallin received a commitment from Bonner Lumber Company of Missoula. Unfortunately, heavy snow and labor troubles prevented an early delivery of materials. At this time, the purchase of lumber for a hotel or resort for amounts under \$1,000 did not have to go through the allocation process handled by the Civilian Production Administration, so Nichols sug-

gested Hallin prepare cost estimates for the jobs and be prepared to go to Helena with Huntley Child to secure the needed lumber.⁴¹

In the meantime, Hallin learned that the \$1,000 amount must also include labor, so he sought permission from Yellowstone Park Company official Ed Moorman to tear down two of the old dormitories and several cabins. That would provide the needed wood to repair the floors at Roosevelt Lodge and Old Faithful Lodge plus take care of needed repairs at a few cabins.⁴² Hallin was able to salvage 5,000 feet of lumber from each building, mostly shiplap 2 x 4s, 1 x 6s, and 1 x 8s. This amount of material allowed him to also make repairs at Canyon Lodge. Hallin also supervised the cleanup around the Mammoth housekeeping cabins. In a letter to Nichols, he wrote, "I do not think that the grounds have ever been cleaned up since the cabins were built. You can readily see how much dirt there is when we can find six dump truck loads of tin cans, bottles, rags, and old stove pipes in one day." He planned to do a similar cleanup behind the Mammoth Hotel the following week.⁴³

In January 1946, Director Drury, who favored showers over tubs, wanted assurance that bathing facilities would be adequate in Yellowstone and urged the Yellowstone Park Company to install new facilities in other buildings if they could not get the older bathhouses ready.⁴⁴

Most of the facilities were opened by June 20, except for Lake Hotel, which did not open. Haynes Picture Shop, the cafeteria, and the store in the camp-

ground in Mammoth opened later in the summer. Camp Roosevelt opened by June 20, but a labor shortage caused it to close before the month was over. Only 75 percent of park accommodations were available for occupancy; consequently, many people stayed in the surrounding communities or in their autos. Not only did the Yellowstone Park Company have to cope with the unprecedented numbers of guests, but they also received many complaints, which could be attributed mainly to inexperienced help. Prior to the war, two clerks could manage the reservations, but in 1946 the company had to employ 12 people to accomplish the task. In 1941, the telegraph office had handled about 200 messages per day; in 1946, the number had risen to 800 or 900 per day. Finding competent and reliable staff was a post-war problem as the attitude of "labor expecting to receive high wages with little work" was prevalent. During June, the Yellowstone Park Company had 260 employees quit for one reason or another; some were dismissed due to drunken behavior.⁴⁵

In March, F. E. Kammermeyer, who had managed the transportation division for more than 25 years, had returned to get his operation going again—the buses had not run since 1942. Again Western Air Lines began regular flights to West Yellowstone, and rail service resumed after being discontinued during the war.⁴⁶

Rumors about Lake Hotel's fate began again in June. Assistant to the Superintendent Joe Joffe received an inquiry from S. E. Boyer of Casper, Wyo-



Lake Hotel. 1953.

ming, about possibly buying the hotel for salvage material so he could build needed homes for veterans. Joffe responded with the news that the Company planned to tear down part of the building, but because materials were scarce, he was sure the Yellowstone Park Company would use all of it for its own needs. Joffe portrayed the acute situation in the Park in his letter, "They are really up against it themselves in trying to meet the demand. The Park is getting travel exceeding even the wildest expectations, and it is truly a mad house here. Accommodations are sold out every night, and hundreds of persons are being turned away."⁴⁷ Fortunately, the Yellowstone Park Company did not have time to start work on the Lake Hotel.

During the summer, Nichols received permission to remove or tear down the auto repair shop and gas station buildings at Tower Fall and move the tank and pumps to use at Roosevelt Lodge. With a change in the road configuration, the facility was not needed at Tower. Nichols believed that once a decision had been reached on the construction of the Northeast Entrance road, a filling station would be needed at the junction.⁴⁸

In July 1946, Haynes reported to Superintendent Rogers that most of his film-processing business was with park employees and that "the guests of the park make notoriously rapid trips through the park and do not stay long enough in one place for us to process their films." Thus, he requested permission to eliminate this expensive and unprofitable operation. He also noted that he was not selling grocery items, operating long-distance telephone service, or operating the contract postal station at the Tower Fall store.⁴⁹

In August, Hamilton wrote Anna Pryor proposing to purchase her interests in the park. He reminded her that he knew that all of her buildings were subject to demolition just as some of his buildings were, with the exception of the Fishing Bridge and the Basin Auto Camp store. In closing the letter, Hamilton wittingly wrote, "If we can agree, the deal would be all cash and then you could live the life of Riley until St. Peter happens to call your number. In the usual turmoil, C. A. Hamilton."⁵⁰ Informing Superintendent Rogers of his intentions, Hamilton stated that he would construct a modern store at Mammoth on the designated site and that he thought he and Nichols could "reach an understanding so that he would take over the cafeteria setup at that point." He also requested a site at Gardiner for a warehouse, which he would use as a central distribution point for all his stores.⁵¹

In October, construction manager Hallin began tearing up the Mammoth tennis court, but by November he had only removed 16 feet of it; the debris was deposited at the Mammoth dump. Hallin was still examining all areas in the park for potential salvage, but Nichols denied Hallin's request to tear down the old bunkhouse at West Yellowstone; it was still being used.⁵² The other major cleanup was the demolition of the Shaw and Powell camp buildings in Willow Park. Built in 1913, the buildings, had been abandoned in 1917.⁵³

A planning conference held in January 1947 to outline the Yellowstone Park Company's improvement program and to prioritize construction, was attended by park staff and company officials. With the nightmarish year of 1946 behind them, it was imperative that they prepare for the expected high visitation of 1947 despite the continuing post-war problems. The company planned to resume projects that had been planned prior to the war within the constraints of a continuing shortage of building materials. The company's improvement priorities for 1947 were the installation of additional public bathing facilities at Fishing Bridge and Old Faithful; installation of toilet and bathing facilities in the manager's and cook's cabins at Old Faithful, Fishing Bridge and West Thumb; installation of water and sewer systems and bathroom facilities in the Lake Lodge cabin area; initiation of planning for buildings at West Thumb; and preliminary discussions on the development at Canyon.⁵⁴ The park's priorities were slightly different from the company's. Yellowstone Park Company had prioritized the work at Lake, Old Faithful, and the Canyon development ahead of West Thumb. But what concerned Superintendent Rogers more was the absence of an architectural style guideline for all of the concessioners to follow. The National Park Service had promised an architectural guideline (being prepared by National Park Service architect Halsey Davidson) to the Yellowstone Park Company, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Haynes, but it had not been presented by the time of the planning meeting. Superintendent Rogers was afraid that "we may lose the advantage of this initiative if the Service is not able to present such plans to the concessioners within another six weeks or less."⁵⁵

C. A. Hamilton was the first concessioner to become a victim of the regional architect's failure to produce the guideline for the West Thumb area in a timely manner. On February 4, Hamilton sent in plans for

approval for a type of service station that many major oil companies were beginning to build. These stations were pre-fabricated to control costs and allow a minimum set-up time. The pre-fabricated facility could also be relocated to other sites if necessary. Assistant Superintendent Fred Johnston urged Regional Director Merriam to have Architect Davidson finish the architectural guidelines so the park could comment on Hamilton's proposal and not delay his project.

The intent of a National Park Service architectural style guideline was to produce a "design which would provide harmony in appearance among the various structures to be built by the several concessioners and also provide some scheme of floor layout which would permit economical operation of the facilities during periods of light travel." Davidson's work was not intended to be preliminary drawings for the concessioner, but only to create a style from which the concessioner's architect could work. Yellowstone Park Company architect, Fred Willson of Bozeman, agreed that there was a need for "improved building design." The park recognized that:

each concessioner wishes to have a certain amount of individuality reflected in his buildings so that they do not appear to come from the same mold, and that character should not be difficult to obtain with a good style of architecture.⁵⁶

On June 25, Hamilton received the approval for the preliminary plans for the station. In the interim, there was much discussion, both philosophical and technical, about the station's design. Hamilton's initial design was for a modern station, but the park wanted a design that reflected more of a "park feeling." Park staff believed that the use of "enameled steel would not be suitable since it would be impossible by texture of construction or color to make this building harmonize with other buildings in the locality." They wanted the station to be constructed of reinforced concrete so it would be strong enough to withstand heavy snow loads. Hamilton then began planning the construction of a store at West Thumb. Hillory Tolson, the acting director, delayed approval for this plan until the Department of the Interior completed a concessions policy.⁵⁷

During the summer, Hamilton sought and received permission to reshingle the roof of the dwell-

ing behind the Lake store as well as the lower store at Old Faithful. In the approval letter for the reshingling of the lower store, Rogers advised Hamilton to use the most economical roofing material since that store was scheduled for demolition in a few years. He suggested a composition shingle, but the color or color mixtures would need park approval.⁵⁸

C. A. Hamilton's daughter and son-in-law, Trevor and Ellie Povah, had joined the business in 1945 and needed a place in the Old Faithful area to live. The first proposal was to move the Fishing Bridge laundry-and-bathhouse to Old Faithful and remodel it as a residence. Superintendent Rogers delayed giving final approval for the building relocation, but did recommend a site in the government apartment and dormitory area. For the first few years, the young Povah family lived in two cubicles, separated by a public hall, just beyond the entrance to the swimming pool. Later, they rented the winterkeeper's cottage while still using the rooms at the pool.⁵⁹

The Yellowstone Park Company was also involved in the architectural style issue at West Thumb because of its plans to construct a tourist building. They were eager for their architect, Fred Willson, to prepare the drawings.⁶⁰

In 1947, Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug paid a visit to Yellowstone and came away with the feeling that perhaps the Old Faithful swimming pool should not be scrapped in 1949 as previously decided. He wrote Director Drury, "I appreciate that the swimming pool is not the sightliest building in the park, but it certainly is no more grotesque than many of the others, and it seems to me to be serving a very useful purpose. I should like to be consulted concerning any plans you might have for the scrapping of this structure."⁶¹

Earlier in the year, Krug had issued a statement on safety in the park hotels and called for sprinkler systems in all old hotels of combustible construction exceeding two stories. The Secretary also called for the enclosure of stairways and other open shafts, installation of adequate lighting systems in the enclosed area, exit doors hung in the direction of exit, installation of panic hardware, and installation of exit lights. He pointed out that these regulations did apply to the Old Faithful Inn. The Yellowstone Park Company was in the process of installing sprinklers in the Old Faithful Inn and Canyon Hotel at the time of the announcement.⁶²

The Bureau of Public Health had put pressure on the Yellowstone Park Company to improve its



Roosevelt Lodge and Haynes Store. 1950.

kitchen facilities at Roosevelt Lodge after a 1947 inspection. Nichols presented two alternatives to Superintendent Rogers, one in which the Lodge would be abandoned and the cabins would be moved to Fishing Bridge (a place he believed visitors preferred to stay), and the other to remodel the existing kitchen at a cost of \$20,000 to satisfy the recommendations of the Bureau of Public Health. The National Park Service did not want to abandon the Lodge so Nichols's proposal to remodel the kitchen was sent to the Bureau of Public Health for approval.⁶³

The Yellowstone Park Company also had to make a decision on the future of the Lake Hotel. In the spring of 1948, the company intended to make significant improvements to the older part of the hotel, but they soon discovered that part of the foundation under the south portion of the dining room would need to be redone. There was a shortage of cement and no labor crew, so the work was not done. The company decided to do the work in 1949 so the hotel would be ready for the 1950 season. With Krug's new regulations on sprinkler systems for the older hotels, the company was also faced with that project and expense. Nichols wrote to Director Drury explaining that pre-war plans called for the conversion of the Lake Hotel to a lodge-type facility similar to what had been done at Mammoth. He reported that the north wing of the hotel had been torn down (a decision he regretted), and there had been talk of tearing down the remaining wing. In 1946 and 1947, he told Drury, the company had accommodated 200 people a night in the wing, but no one could have anticipated the huge increase in visitation or the tremendous increase in the costs of

materials and labor. He sought permission from Drury to operate the newer section of the hotel with the sprinklers in 1949.⁶⁴

At the end of the 1949 season, the park had the following number of rooms:

Mammoth Hotel	105 rooms
Canyon Hotel	377 rooms
Old Faithful Inn	363 rooms
Lake Hotel	110 rooms
Mammoth cottages	134
Mammoth cabins	163
Canyon Lodge	270
Canyon cabins	140
Old Faithful Lodge	270
Old Faithful cabins	406
Lake Lodge	167
Fishing Bridge cabins	300
Roosevelt Lodge	97
West Thumb	60
Total number of rooms	2,962 rooms ⁶⁵

Souvenirs and curios became a systemwide issue in 1948 with a new order being issued to the concessioners:

Items may be recognized works of art, or useful or durable goods, manufactured in neighboring countries—such as Canada and Mexico—when place of manufacture is indicated by conspicuous label.⁶⁶

Rogers issued the following guidelines for Hamilton Stores:

1. Items should be recognized works of art, or useful or durable goods representative of Yellowstone National Park or the surrounding area.
2. Items may be representative of other National Parks areas.
3. Cheap and shoddy items should in all cases be eliminated upon disposal of present stock.
4. Vulgar items and those of obvious bad taste should be destroyed and in no case displayed or offered for sale.⁶⁷

Superintendent Rogers informed Director Drury that Mr. Povah was responding to the new regulations with “fine cooperation” and had “expressed a willingness to eliminate all items which are not satisfactory to the Superintendent.”⁶⁸

The question of the Old Faithful swimming pool came up again in 1948 after the high-profile involvement of Secretary of the Interior Krug in 1947. Trevor Povah wrote to the Secretary and said that he had been “waiting a reply since last Spring to his proposal to transfer title to the swimming pool at Old Faithful and requested an extension of the deadline for its removal.” Krug asked Director Drury to make sure Povah got a prompt reply and that “some plan be worked out for maintaining a satisfactory swimming pool convenient to park visitors in the Old Faithful area.” A Montana State College scientist “expressed doubt that the chlorine content of the water which leaves the pool as overflow is sufficient to have a detrimental effect upon

aquatic life [in Firehole River],” but more tests of the effluent were scheduled for the time the pool would be drained next season and while the pool was in full operation. Povah suggested that a dechlorinator compound such as sodium thiosulfate be added. He also wanted the park to consider the two nearby government drainage systems that also used chlorine when a study of the pool drainage was done. Because the pool would probably be demolished in 1949, Povah did not want to add any undue costs to the operation of the pool. Then, Povah expressed an interest in relocating to a more convenient location near the projected new road at Old Faithful.⁶⁹

Director Drury approved an agreement between Hamilton Stores, Inc. and Yellowstone Park Company for the lease of store and stand space in the Canyon, Lake, and Old Faithful lodges and for the operation of the service stations in the park. The agreement allowed the Yellowstone Park Company 12.5 percent of Hamilton’s gross sales in lieu of rent and stipulated that Hamilton Stores would continue to furnish meals and lodging during the pre-season and post-season, before and after the Yellowstone Park Company was open for business. One clause stated that the agreement would extend beyond the Hamilton Store, Inc. contract, which expired on December 31, 1950.⁷⁰

In another development, Anna Pryor wrote to the National Park Service Supervisor of Concessions in Washington and indicated that she would like to trans-



Pryor Filling Station at Canyon Junction. 1947.

fer her lease to Mr. and Mrs. Trevor Povah, a couple she admired. She felt confident of Povah's "ability and integrity." Pryor later said "the past few years has been a strain on us" and when the Povahs had approached her, she was receptive. She felt that they measured up to her requirements.⁷¹

The concessioners were upset with Harry Truman's successful bid for the presidency in 1948 because the Democratic Secretary of the Interior, Julius Krug, wanted the National Park Service to take over concessions as each lease expired. The National Park Service would then offer each concession at public bid for the privilege of the operation.⁷² Julius Krug followed in the footsteps of Harold Ickes, who as Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, had tried for many years to have legislation introduced authorizing government ownership of the concessioners' facilities.⁷³ Haynes, who was in Washington to negotiate a new contract, heard Assistant Secretary Girard Davidson and National Park Service Assistant Director Arthur Demaray "in my presence state that it isn't the Haynes, Inc. buildings that the Government is most desirous of buying, it is those used for meals and lodgings that they want to take over first."⁷⁴

In November 1948, the Secretary received a copy of the proposed new concession policies written by the National Park Service's Concessions Advisory Committee. The study of the concessions was initiated because of criticism of the fact that the Yosemite Park and Curry Company had a gross income of \$2,445,251 in 1948, but from the government only received \$6,000 in franchise fees.⁷⁵ During much of 1949, the new concessions policy, especially the provision for the government to purchase the concession facilities, was debated.

Naturally, Yellowstone concessioners were upset by this new policy and they worked with concessioners in other parks to get their message before the different Congressional committees. Haynes was absolutely opposed to the new policy, but in a letter to Nichols, Povah, and Daggett Harvey (Chairman of the Western Conference of National Park Concessioners), he wrote, "I am preparing a statement to read at the preliminary meeting in Santa Fe of concessioners, if I have an opportunity. I do not plan

to testify at the hearing. (Wouldn't make a good witness, being a post card seller only)."

Business went on in the park. Employee housing had been a problem for all the concessioners from the time they began operating in the park. In the spring of 1949, the Yellowstone Park Company received a request from an employee to be allowed to bring his own trailer into the park as housing. Nichols replied to the prospective employee that there were no accommodations for trailers, other than the government trailer camps that allowed only a 30-day stay. Despite the continual problem of employee housing, Nichols was worried that if he allowed even one employee to bring a trailer into the park he would be creating a bad precedent. Because the labor situation had eased the previous year, he believed "we can tighten up a little bit on our requirements."⁷⁶

Before the war started, there had been plans to eventually abandon the Lake Lodge area; some cabins were even moved to Fishing Bridge. However, by 1949, critical shortages of tourist accommodations led the National Park Service to ask the Yellowstone Park Company to not abandon Lake Lodge and to start making plans for bringing it up to the standards of the Old Faithful lodge area. Plans were made in 1949 to house guests in the Lake Hotel's east wing assuming all of the safety measures were completed by the opening of the season. Director Drury dispelled any rumors about abandoning the hotel by asking the Yellowstone Park Company to rehabilitate it and reported that the National Park Service "will provide access roads thereto so as to make the north or rear of the building readily convenient for guests arriving by auto or bus."⁷⁷

That year the term "operators" was officially changed to "concessioners," as Director Drury, in his written order to the field offices wrote, "I dislike to seem over-meticulous in relatively minor matters" but he disliked the terms "operators or concessionaires"⁷⁸

The park and the concessioners had experienced nightmares on either end of the 1940s—the beginning of World War II, which brought an extraordinary drop in visitation and closure of facilities, and an explosion of visitation coupled with inadequate facilities.