Discoveries along the Trail

By Dave Habura, our State of Washington Correspondent

In 1915, when the Yellowstone Trail forged a route west, the Automobile BlueBooks (ABB) were the equivalent of the modern GPS. This partial page from the 1914-1915 volume of the book describes the original Yellowstone Trail route between Easton (on the Snoqualmie Pass road) and Ellensburg, Washington. My wife Sheila and I set out to find sites in the old guide which are highlighted in yellow, below.

Driving over Snoqualmie Pass on the 1915 Yellowstone Trail route, we stopped and took photos at the water trough recently uncovered by fellow Yellowstone Trail friends Curt and Leona Cunningham (47.4192, -121.4352). The history of the trough is not clear, but it is beside the old road and apparently of an early date. The design is puzzling because it would seem to best serve horses or livestock, but the few water troughs I have seen for that purpose along roads have been elevated or raised, I suppose to make it easier for animals in harness to drink.

Returning to the interstate we drove on to Cle Elum. The Milwaukee Road Cle Elum rail depot in South Cle Elum was built in 1909 and was across a field and railroad tracks from the 1915 YT which followed Westside Road. (Depot: 47.1832, -120.9561) Later, in 1918 - 20, the Milwaukee built the huge sub station in the photo (at right) that fed power to the rail line, which was electrified in those days. But by that time the YT took a relocated route about a mile further north.

Con't next page
Between Cle Elum and Ellensburg, the 1915 Yellowstone Trail followed along what is now the Red Bridge Road. The red brick house in the ABB guide still stands, at the turn in the Blue Book (47.2038, -120.7733). Not far beyond, the old road turns south toward Ellensburg. There are segments of the 1915 route along modern US97, and you can easily drive one along Bettas Road.

The old route turned east on Dry Creek Road. One of the pleasures of following the original old road is to discover a building from a hundred years ago identified in the directions. Two were identified along Dry Creek Road.

At the intersection of what is now Faust and Dry Creek roads, the ABB noted; “Through crossroads at Woldale School.” and today the old Woldale School, District 13, is still there, complete with flagpole (470251, -120.5930)! A little web research revealed that it was built in 1907, so it was definitely a waypoint seen by 1915 travelers on the original Yellowstone Trail.

The Blue Books had descriptions in both directions on the old roads. In the westbound direction, just before what is now Reecer Creek Road, there was a “Left fork just beyond Red Barn on Left” and by golly there is a red barn with English gambrel roof just before that Y today (47.0121, -120.5706). It looks old enough to be the original, even though the truck parked in front is a “modern” International farm wagon.

After stopping in Ellensburg, we decided to follow the 1920’s Yakima Canyon road, rather than the longer and partly graveled 1915 Wenas Road route. We drove into downtown Yakima and had a late lunch, and I photographed the Commercial Hotel which had a full page ad in the 1915 ABB. It is now The Grand and provides nice apartments for those over 55 (46.6031, -120.5025). Our return home was over the beautiful Chinoook Pass on the shoulder of Mt Rainier, ending an enjoyable day trip with some new discoveries along the Trail. §
In past *Arrows* we have written about two great relay races along the Yellowstone Trail conducted in 1915 from Chicago to Seattle and 1916 from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound. Reports from the Yellowstone Trail Association said that no one was killed in either race, although there were two near-accidents.

However, intrepid history buff and friend of the YT, JJ Johnson, had shared with us many contemporary newspaper articles about the Trail, one of which declared that a death had occurred in the June 15-19, 1915 race. A detailed description of the supposed fatal accident was printed.

*The Seattle Star* and the *Tacoma Times* each carried large headlines on June 19, 1915 screaming “Auto in Ditch; Man is Killed” and “Road Race Ends in Fatal Smash; Legislator Killed.” Each outlined the “accident” which they declared occurred on the last lap of the race, about one hour east of Seattle, in Redmond. The car, they said, skidded and ended in a ditch, upside down, “instantly killing state legislator George E. Dickson.”

The Aberdeen, South Dakota, *Herald* picked up the tale from the United Press and repeated the story on June 20. The Waupaca, Wisconsin, *Record-Leader* printed the story on June 24. We do not know how many other newspapers carried the death notice.

So what was the truth? Was there a death or not? JJ Johnson found the truth in the July 22, 1915 (one month after the relay race) issue of the Waupaca Record-Leader, the only newspaper we know of that printed a retraction. The article follows:

---

**Record Leader - July 22, 1915**

**YELLOWSTONE TRAIL DRIVER NOT KILLED.**

*Story Circulated Was Fake - Started By Seattle Paper - Was Accepted As The Truth.*

Here is a good example of a fake newspaper story, and probably explains how the word got out that the last driver on the Yellowstone Trail run from Chicago to Seattle, June 15 to 19, was killed; two men with him were seriously injured. A Seattle paper got hold of the bit of news and taking for granted that the man in the Ford car was the trail driver, proclaimed by banner headlines across the top of the front page that 'Cross-Country Relay Race Ends in Tragedy at Redmond.'
The paper’s first paragraph was set in large type, two columns wide, and was:

“George E. Dickson of Ellensburg, former member of the legislature, and prominently mentioned for the speakership during the 1911 session, was killed instantly and John L. Gilmore of Ballard and John Keller a real estate man of Ellensburg, were injured when a Ford automobile, in which the last lap of the 100-hour race against time from Chicago to Seattle, over the new Yellowstone Trail, was being run, skidding on a curve two and a half miles east of Redmond, and turned over in the ditch, at 8:50 Saturday morning.”

Here was a metropolitan newspaper with an opportunity to herald a great run made more than half way across the continent, half faking that that run had ended in death to the last driver. Surely every Seattle newspaper knew that this run would be made; knew who would carry the message into Seattle and what kind of a car would be driven.

The driver’s name was not Dickson; it was E.F. Schultz who drove the car - a Studebaker and not a Ford - over the last lap of the relay, and S.H. Kreidell who carried the message. This is according to a report made by H.O. Cooley of Aberdeen, South Dakota. Mr. Cooley is secretary of the Yellowstone Trail association.

The saying that “Falsehood travels on many wings, truth but two” appears to have been as alive and well 100 years ago as it is today. The rush to print, to scoop, to be “first,” still trumps accuracy, confounding research on many fronts. §
Atlantic coastal area of Cape Cod and New England. An ocean trip on a “Whale Watch” ship was a highlight. I then followed the YT back to my home in Wisconsin. I did not experience the YT route in far northwestern Indiana or through the Chicago area, but I will complete that another time. I left on May 11 and spent a total of fourteen days on the road.

If you look at a US map, you will see that this distance is less than one-half of the distance I traveled last year from Seattle back to Wisconsin. It was also much easier, as there are no gravel roads over mountain passes and no muddy trails across the open plains…doggone it!

I spent almost all of my time on two-lane blacktop US and state highways through mostly developed and heavily populated areas that are not my favorite places. The weather was fantastic for a few days, lousy for a few, and mixed for the rest. Prices for everything are much higher in the eastern states than in the west and that tempered my fun, but I enjoyed the less-populated parts of New England, up-state New York, and the Berkshires in western Massachusetts.

I will provide more information and links to my blog along with select photos in the next Arrow.

Last Year’s Road Trip West

This past year, 2012, I explored the “Evergreen State” of Washington, following the early southern route of the YT westward, and the later northern route on my return to Spokane. My trip was 6,650 miles round trip and I spent 36 days on the road. Traveling to and from Washington from my home in Wisconsin is very enjoyable, as I wrote about last year. On this trip, I spent eight days driving to the Idaho/Washington state line, twenty-two days exploring Washington’s wonders, and six hot and sometimes stormy days driving back to my home.

The rolling wheat fields of the eastern “Palouse”, the arid areas in the west-central region, the Cascade Mountain Range, the Seattle area, and Puget Sound were all highlights of this leg of my trip.

On the return leg, I really enjoyed driving over the old Blewett Pass with Arrow contributor Dave Habura, saw miles and miles of wheat, apples, and cherries. I saw some desolation, and weathered some storms. And, I experienced all kinds of road conditions, which added to my experience.

I had a great time and I wandered at my own pace, stopping here and there when I wanted to. A big requirement of a “good” trip for me is NOT to have deadlines and commitments. I realize that not everyone is able to do it this way, but I suggest that you at least try to keep your plans flexible. Surprises…good and bad…can alter your plans, so allow yourself free time to get the most out of your road trips, even if they are only for a day or a weekend. I firmly believe that “surprises” turn a routine trip into an adventure!

Due to space limitations, my trip blog is too large to be included in this Arrow. I feel that major editing loses the first impressions and continuity of my “on-the-fly” daily postings, so I have made it available for you to read by clicking here:

Part 1 Westbound - Home to Seattle via Southern WA YT Route 2012 TRIP LOG Day 1 – 14

Part 2 Eastbound - Return via Northern WA YT Route 2012 TRIP LOG Day 15 – 36

Happy Trails,  
Mark Mowbray, Executive Director, Yellowstone Trail Association

Please feel free to contact me any time by e-mail at mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org  §
Among Other Things:

A Yellowstone Challenge

Have you been to Yellowstone National Park recently? Have you cussed about the crowded roads there? Well, just be thankful you weren’t there almost 100 years ago. Read on......

With the big financial brouhaha in Washington, D.C., many tourists are facing a challenge to their vacation plans to visit Yellowstone, Glacier and other national parks this summer as parts of the parks will be late in opening.

But motorists have faced challenges before in Yellowstone Park which first allowed cars to use roads in the park in 1915 – 98 years ago. No, I wasn’t there … I came along a few years later, but I’ll tell you about 1915 anyway.

Travel season began late that year, too, Aug. 1, when a total of 3,513 auto passengers visited the park. But motorists faced a bureaucratic blizzard of do’s and don’ts.

Travel times of motor vehicles were closely logged and drivers were fined if they arrived too early at a given point: “$0.50 per minute for each of the first five minutes; $1.00 per minute for each of the next 20 minutes; $25 fine or ejection from the park, or both … for being more than 25 minutes early.” The quote is from the March 1, 1916 edition of the Yellowstone National Park rule book for motor vehicle operation.

Among other things, the book advised that the park’s speed limit was 12 miles per hour ascending and 10 mph descending steep grades, and 8 mph when approaching sharp curves.

On straight stretches and “when no team is nearer than 200 yards and when approaching team or riding animals” autos had to take the outer edge of the road for all teams, saddle horses and pack trains. Passing speed of cars was limited to eight mph when meeting or overtaking horses, teams or pack trains.

Only private cars were permitted in the park, no commercial vehicles. They were introduced in 1917. No motorcycles either. When motorists registered at the park entrance they received a rule book showing the schedule on which one must travel. “Be sure to have two good extra casings on your car or you will not be allowed to enter,” the rule book advised. “Tickets of passage” were purchased at entry stations and surrendered at the last check station on leaving the park. Tickets showed the name of the owner, license number, make of machine and manufacturer’s number, name of driver, seating capacity and number of passengers. Cost was $7.50 per single trip through the park, $10 for the season.

Muffler cutouts had to be closed while approaching “riding horses, horse drawn vehicles, hotels, camps or soldier stations.” Cars in motion had to be at least 50 yards apart except while passing. Motorists had to satisfy guards at entry stations that their vehicles were in “first class working order and capable of making the trip, and that there is sufficient gasoline in the tank to reach the next place where it may be obtained.”

Giving advanced warning of what to expect while driving in the park was the Goodrich Tire Company’s complimentary Yellowstone Trail routing book. Details included certain barns, stream fords, railroads, and other landmarks – all the way from Seattle to Yellowstone via Spokane, Missoula and Butte; and direct from Deer Lodge to Butte.

In addition to family safety, proper luggage storage, and awareness of Yellowstone speed limits, the publication advised motorists to make room for “one extra casing in a fire cover; two or more extra inner tubes properly wrapped to protect from oil and prevent chafing; one box of Goodrich Self-Vulcanizing Patches” and a box of Goodrich permanent puncture plugs (for smaller punctures); one Goodrich tire sleeve; one set of Goodrich applying levers; one box powdered soapstone or mica to be used between casing and tube to prevent sticking; six valve insides and valve caps; three dust caps; an air pump; jack; a Goodrich tire caliper (to insure correct inflation); and Goodrich touring cards or route books.

If one got lost, despite the explicitly detail route book, not to worry. Sooner or later one of three Goodyear truck crews might find the wanderers.
A Tale of Two Bridges, Part 2:  
The Bridge at Mobridge

The old Yellowstone Trail Association faced many challenges as it worked to connect roads into one major route across the US. But what really bugged the organization was getting bridges built. Without them, the transcontinental route was moot. In the last *Arrow* the tale of getting the bridge over the Little Missouri River at Marmarth, North Dakota was told. Now we look at the bridge over the Missouri River at Mobridge, South Dakota.

With a railroad and the Yellowstone Trail and the in-bred optimism of Westerners, Mobridge, South Dakota, had high but futile hopes for itself. Witness this 1914 advertisement:

*Mobridge will be as large as Sioux City or Omaha within twenty-five years. For suggestions as to business opportunities write the Secretary of the Mobridge Commercial Club.*

A highway bridge crossing the Missouri River at Mobridge was a major goal of J.W. Parmley. This would be the last major link in his dream of a transcontinental route. As a trail founder, he became acutely aware of the need of connection. Spending a night in his car because he missed the last ferry and because he feared driving on the railroad bridge at night certainly didn’t help lessen his desire for a bridge. But getting it wasn’t easy.

A ferry had been operated since 1907 by the Jacobson family, but floods, ice and low water made the trip risky. Since they were now also ferrying summer travelers brought by the widely publicized Yellowstone Trail at $1.00 per car, Parmley figured it was only just that the association should get 10¢ per car and driver and ½¢ per passenger. The summer of 1922, that amounted to $532. The deal also served to monitor traffic on the trail.

In October of 1922 a 1300 foot 52-boat pontoon bridge was built, but it would have to be removed before the river froze. A permanent solution was needed. *Con't next page*
Continued

A Tale of Two Bridges

It was Governor Norbeck who offered hope. In 1921 he suggested a small property tax increase be put in a bridge fund for all five suggested South Dakota Missouri River bridges and when enough money accumulated, each bridge in turn would be built - all of them completed in about 15 years. Parmley couldn’t wait. With allies in the legislature, they devised a plan wherein counties would be allowed to contribute in advance to “their” area bridge and get paid back as the taxes accumulated. Oddly, nowhere was federal aid availability mentioned. It could have saved 50%.

Parmley and the Yellowstone Trail Association beat the bushes (and trail member towns) for funds. Trail counties sold bonds and their $282,000 Mobridge “wagon bridge,” was the first to be completed of South Dakota’s great bridges across the Missouri.

At last the trail was whole on November 11, 1924.

The 1924 bridge with Mobridge in background. The area just across the bridge is now a lake.
The Red Brick Road - Redux

Faithful readers will note that the Red Brick Road near Redmond, Washington, just off the Redmond/Fall City Road has appeared in the *Arrow* several times. That one mile piece of the Yellowstone Trail still is paved in bricks, most of them from just before the 1915 arrival of the Trail. This time the take on that subject is offered by one who actually lives ON that road, 196th Ave. NE. Jon Dreher looks at the road from a first-person perspective. He writes:

"I do have an interest in the history of my road and its role as part of the Yellowstone Trail. I am happy to report that the road is still in its original condition and that I believe it will stay that way for some time. There are at least two alternative, parallel routes nearby that reduce demand on the road and I know its designation as a County Landmark and place on the National Register of Historic Places serve as some protection.

“The growth of the Puget Sound area has not left the road completely untouched, though, and a recent construction project at the northern terminus of the brick road removed about 25 feet of the original brick. On a positive note, however, the brick was carefully removed and stored by the county for use in future repairs on the road. Additionally, on Union Hill Road, the project uncovered more original brick beneath the asphalt that originally covered the bricks in 1962. Thanks to a vigilant neighbor, those bricks, too, were carefully removed and stored.

“Similarly, when a neighbor needed to replace a bridge for the driveway over a creek, the county required that a new path be cut from the rear of the property for the heavy equipment so that it would not travel on the brick road and risk damaging the surface. I have found material referencing damage done to the road in 1915 by a steam tractor with heavy, spiked metal wheels. The damage is still visible today and none of the bricks in other places look ‘new.’

“As for the old bricks recently discovered during construction, there was a slightly larger area dug up because there is a new bridge being installed and the roadway of the intersecting road (Union Hill Road) is being expanded. My guess would be that an additional 100 feet or so of original brick was uncovered. The original brick road extended for another mile down the Union Hill Road and, as far as I know, the rest of the original brick may be entombed under the modern asphalt.

“The examples of caring neighbors and local government let me know that people take the preservation of our historic landmark seriously and I know the residents on the road will fight for its preservation as well." §
Here are Yellowstone Trail events past and future that we have heard about. If we’ve missed your event or you have plans for one, let us know about it.

1 Hudson, Wisconsin 3rd annual Yellowstone Trail Heritage Day, June 1 was great! The weather was cooperating this year and additional new activities helped draw the crowd.

2 Hamlet, Indiana will hold their Yellowstone Trail Fest August 16-18. This year’s celebration promises to be bigger and better because it is combined with the town’s 150th anniversary. Mixing the old with the new, they will feature a photography contest, a Corn Hole Tournament, Miss Yellowstone Pageant, a raffle for computers, an 1863 circuit riding preacher with some old time preaching and hymn singing, tug o’ war teams, pie eating and a big parade. Not bad for a “hamlet” of 800+ population.

"A Celebration of Transportation"
And just like the roads of the past, festivals of today connect friends and family.

Join us for our annual celebration of the Yellowstone Trail!
Hamlet, Indiana Trail Fest
August 16-18

3 Livingston, Montana. One mile south on US 89 (the Yellowstone Trail) “Tin Can Tourists & Old Time Fiddlers on the YT” will hold their 39th annual picnic. They say, “it is a good deal more than a picnic and welcomes any players of roots music. Lots of jamming around the campground which is on the Old Mercier Ranch. While there are spectators, there are a good deal more musicians.” [Ed. note: “Tin Can Tourists” was a name given to early 20th century “RV” tourists.]

Tin Can Tourists are invited to gather in conjunction with the picnic. It is dry camping with no electric, but there are porta potties provided, a free breakfast on Sun and a pot luck Sat afternoon. Camping is free but there are restrictions. Wonderful to go to sleep under the Montana sky being serenaded by bluegrass, old timey, mountain, Celtic, gospel, cowboy singers and the like. See fiddlerspicnic.blogspot.com for more details.” Fun stuff on the YT!

4 On May 9, 2013, Yellowstone Trail Association Executive Director Mark Mowbray and Theresa, Wisconsin, area Trailman John Battell presented a program at the Theresa Public Library to about 25 people. The new 2013 Yellowstone Trail Association video had its public debut at the program, and John gave a picture presentation of the Yellowstone Trail in the Theresa area, showing pictures on the Trail from the early 1900’s and today. Mark brought three of the 1919 YT Route Folder reprints, and a drawing was held for them. Everyone present seemed to enjoy the program.

The Theresa Historical Society has acquired the one remaining YT tourist cabin from the former site of the Louis Beck Motor Garage in Theresa. It will be moved to the society’s historical site, which includes Solomon Juneau’s only remaining residence, an old log cabin, an 1849 home, and many historic furnishings, tools, and other items.

Con’t next page
Juneau was a founder of Milwaukee. The tourist cabin will be restored, and open to the public, and will be a “spokesman” for the Yellowstone Trail.

Residents of the River View Hills Land Lease Community in Theresa held a fund raiser to benefit the Yellowstone Trail Association and the local preservation of Yellowstone Trail history. Two hundred dollars was raised, with $75 being given as a donation to the Yellowstone Trail Association, the rest being used to purchase from Yellowstone Trail Publishers two signs, a poster, and books. One book will be donated to the local history collection of the Theresa library, and the other books, signs and poster will be donated to the Theresa Historical Society for use with its newly acquired Yellowstone Trail tourist cabin.

**Trail-O-Grams Part Two—Other Notes**

In the last Arrow we reported that Mr. Alan Nuckolls, representative of the Evalyn O. Flory Foundation, had chosen the Yellowstone Trail Association as recipient of a $1000 gift. Mr. Nuckolls and the YTA agreed to use the funds, in part, to erect a YT interpretive sign at the Douglas County Museum in Waterville, Washington. We are happy to report that the sign has now been erected. Lori Ludeman, Director of the museum, has reported that the sign has received quite a bit of attention since installed.

A n honor was bestowed upon the Yellowstone Trail Association last spring. Alice and John Ridge were nominated for a Legacy award given by the Wisconsin Tourism Department nominated for their long-time service to tourism for the state of Wisconsin. They did not win the award, but just to be nominated acknowledged the work of the Association to make the Trail known. Pictured here at the awards ceremony are (from left) Alice Ridge, Secy.; Mark Mowbray, Executive Director; Dr. John Ridge, President; Sheila Nyberg, Vice President. Not shown is Sara Brish, Treasurer.

Who let the cows out? Twelve lifesize cow statues have invaded the small town of Thorp, Wisconsin. Each one is painted and labeled to represent an aspect of the culture of Thorp and are designed to attract tourists. The dairy and agriculture industries are represented by “Cheese Cow,” “Pumpkin Cow,” and “Flower Cow.” The Yellowstone Trail is represented by the cow pictured here, placed in the Yellowstone City Park. More cows may be seen at www.cityofthorp.com
The Great Race. Each year Hagerty Insurance (“Fueling the Collector Car Hobby”) and Hemmings Motor News present the Great Race, a timed/speed/endurance rally. This June around 99 cars, vintage 1969 and older, ran 2100 miles from St. Paul, Minnesota to Mobile, Alabama. This annual event is not so much a spectator sport as it is a friendly, but keen, rivalry among racing participants vying for the $50,000 first prize. The rules are strict and demanding, sometimes coming down to mere seconds in judgement calls. Their route demands that they avoid Interstates.

It was brought to our attention because the first segment followed, or was near, a 70 mile part of the Yellowstone Trail from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Eau Claire, Wisconsin,. The YT was, nonetheless, proud to be part of this event. See more at www.greatrace.com

Speaking of Hemmings, your Executive Director, Mark Mowbray, visited the headquarters of Hemmings publications in Vermont recently and had a chat with Terry McGean, the Editor- in- Chief of that organization. Mark’s enthusiasm about the YT resulted in a fine article about the Trail by Jim Donnelly, Senior Editor of Hemmings Motor News dated August 2013, page 38. Good for you, Mark!

The LeMay Auto Museum, a site a little off the YT, would be of great interest to our readers who are antique auto afficionados. We highly recommend a visit to the LeMay auto museum in Tacoma, Washington, called “America’s Car Museum.” This building and its sister, the “LeMay Family Collection” at Marymount, Washington, comprise the world’s largest privately owned vehicle collection - 5,000 vehicles! Amazing displays of Ferraris, Nashes, British legends, NASCAR stars, racing simulators, movies, and antique cars of all stripes are there. Look at the 1912-1930 cars and think of the daring men who pioneered long distance travel on the YT.

We reported last time that Trailman, long-time member, and Arrow contributor, Lance Sorenson of Hector, Minnesota (on the Trail) was facing a lung transplant. We are happy to report that the transplant was successful and that Lance plans to return home soon after six months at Duke University Hospitals, Durham, North Carolina.

§

Join with us — just $15/year
Yellowstone Trail Association
“A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound”

www.yellowstonetrail.org
info@yellowstonetrail.org

Drive the Trail
Explore History

LeMay, America’s Car Museum at Night.