



Official Publication of The Yellowstone Trail Association  
*"A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"*



## The Yellowstone Trail as Supporting Actor

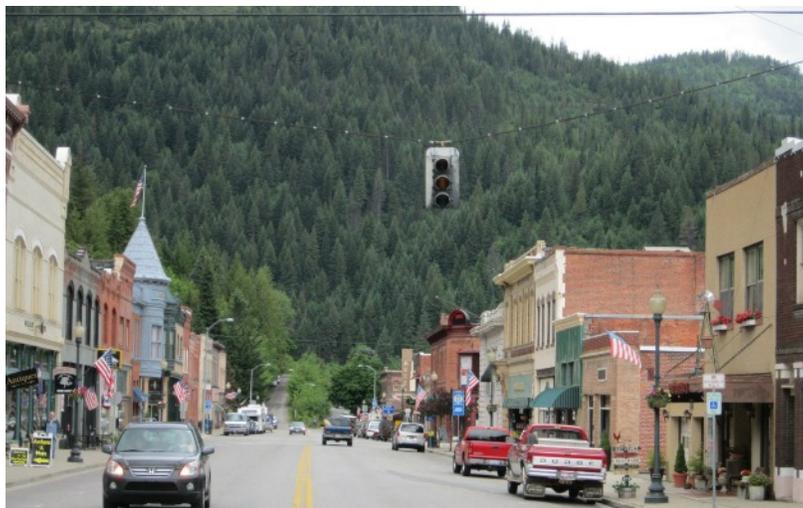
by Alice Ridge, Abstracted from American Road magazine, Summer 2011

"Lights! Camera! Cue the extras. No smiles, people. Mayhem and chaos! Blow the ash!" shouted director Roger Donaldson. The movie industry had come to Wallace, Idaho, on the Yellowstone Trail, in a big way for four months the summer of 1996.

Universal Studio's action film, *Dante's Peak*, was a story of a northwest community called "Dante's Peak" about to be devoured by a volcano. Its human stars were Pierce Brosnan and Linda Hamilton, but the real stars were the pyrotechnics and the tons of ash dropped on the town. Brosnan played a volcanologist who fails to convince a doubting community of the impending danger. Hamilton played the town's mayor who walks a thin line between the two opinions. Of course, the peak does blow, the town becomes bowed but not totally broken under tons of ash, and the stars walk off into the sunset. A different scenario from Brosnan's other life as James Bond, Agent 007, and Hamilton's *Beauty and the Beast* television series, but it did keep one glued to the screen.



Critics said that the best parts were the visual effects combining live-action miniature destruction with 3-D digital computer imagery. One critic said, "The spectacle of the earth tearing itself open is a stunner."



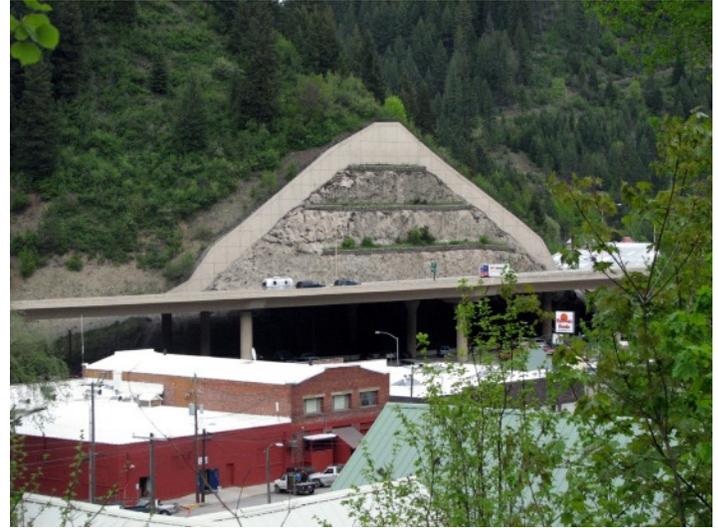
*Downtown Wallace, Idaho. Note "last stoplight".*

### The Real Wallace

The *Shoshone News-Press* reported that Wallace was chosen as the movie site because it was in the northwest and was an "older city with a certain level of economic recovery." A fire in 1890 destroyed the wooden business district. New brick buildings were built immediately, most still standing today, which gives the town that "old" feeling. The surrounding Bitterroot Mountains aren't volcanoes, but they crowd around the town, leaving only a three to six block-wide valley for the town. That didn't leave much room for building an Interstate highway.

Continued

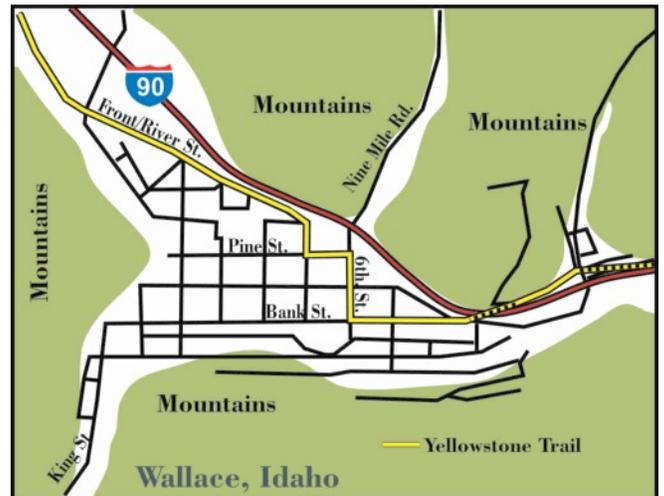
Plans to take up about a third of the city to complete I-90 motivated Wallace citizens to have their entire town listed on the Register of Historic Places, making it difficult to bulldoze any business building. The Interstate was finally built on an elevated viaduct against the mountain on the north edge of town, leaving the old route of US 10 (and thus the route of the Yellowstone Trail) untouched below it. The 1991 completion of the Interstate made Wallace home to the **last stoplight on the I-90** route from Boston to Seattle.



### The Making of the “Dante’s Peak”

The real excitement for the residents of Wallace was not the fictitious story on the screen but the story on the ground - the making of the film. Scratch any resident today, 19 years later, and you’ll still get a detailed story of his or her participation in the great event.

They will even trot you out to I-90 where the crew had built a fake ramp (next to the Yellowstone Trail) which was ripped apart by the “volcano’s” trembling earth, dramatically preventing mass evacuation. Realistic-looking cracks in the buildings were painted on, they will say. If you’ve seen the movie, you know that the stars hide out from the chaos in an abandoned mine entrance, driving a car right into it. Residents will show you the fake mine tunnel used for Brosnan’s wild entrance and the staggering exit of the stars.



The *Shoshone News-Press* described the daily action quite colorfully, especially the mass exodus from the town: “At the director’s signal, the first wave of cars screeched forward and the townsfolk raced down the street and sidewalks. After the first wave of cars passed the Jameson Hotel, one of the large Chevy Suburbans came flying out of the alley, fishtailed in front of the second wave of cars and careened down the street. Flames poured out of that alley and smoke machines laid out a haze which nearly obscured the vehicles. Just as the Suburban passed the Depot, a large chunk of concrete, released from an overhead crane, slammed down on top of the truck as it raced past.”

That was the rehearsal. In a matter of minutes, all the cars were backed up to their original positions, poised with headlights on and windshield wipers off. The extras headed back under the awnings to escape the steady rain and they did it all over again. The first ash fall was expected that night. Peter Haas, company spokesman, assured citizens that the tons of “ash” were safe and only temporary. It was made up of shredded paper, gypsum and sawdust painted with a gray, non-toxic paint.

## Wallace and the Yellowstone Trail

From one cabin in 1884 the town grew quickly due to the many silver mines staked in the area. Wallace, aka “Silver Capital of the World,” has become the hub of one of the world’s richest mining districts. By 1985 the district had produced one billion ounces of silver. Mining still goes on for silver, lead, and zinc .

Moving ore from the mines in the mountains around Wallace was always tricky. Very tough country. By 1914, miners had opened a wagon road over the divide north of Lookout Pass, 12 miles to the east of Wallace. It was this road, Randolph Creek Road, that the Yellowstone Trail Association had to use to extend their route to Seattle. The switchbacks and drop-offs conspired with the snowy weather to make it one of the worst sections of the Trail. There was no usable road over Lookout Pass until 1924. This latter road became the Yellowstone Trail, then US 10 and, finally, I-90. Much of the original Yellowstone Trail can still be driven from Taft, Montana, through Wallace, and on to Coeur d’Alene.

Finally, the ash was cleaned up, profits to the local merchants were toted up, fake ramps were removed and quiet again descended upon Wallace and its supporting actor –the Yellowstone Trail. Ψ

## **Tiny Towns along the Way**

**By Dave Habura, YT Northwest Correspondent**

I dislike driving the interstates. But let's be frank, they are the fastest roads between two points. They are also mind numbing, sleep inducing, and boring. They give a bad name to “road” trip. On the other hand, our Yellowstone Trail is refreshing and interesting, but slower.

One way for the modern destination prone interstate auto traveler to enjoy life a little more, is to make frequent detours off the interstate onto the Trail, and visit some of the fascinating places you can reach if you get off the freeway treadmill. It isn't surprising that the interstate often follows near the route of the Yellowstone Trail. Some of the same forces that determined the route of the Trail, also determined the route of the interstate. Rivers, passes, deltas, cities, and the like played a defining role for both. So it is in Montana.

Between Billings and Bozeman along I-90 there are more than half a dozen respites that not only awaken the drowsy interstater, but entertain as well. These tiny to small towns are often fascinating. If you are traveling with youngsters, a real one room school house, general store, or an old time hotel are great opportunities for discussion and reflection. Old grain elevators, drug store soda fountains, and even garages give adults and children alike an opportunity to learn and enjoy. And for a septuagenarian like myself, they are an opportunity to recall and compare.



Let's take a few easy to reach examples. Try Springdale, (exit 356) You don't have to go to a museum to see a one room school house, established in 1918. Here is one still being used. The latest student count was 6! No problem with the student / teacher ratio here!! A keen eye will spot the rope pull to ring the school bell! And, it is still ringing to bring the next generation to class.



Or try the long abandoned general store at Greycliff (exit 377). The sign alone tells a story: Groceries, Hardware, Gas, Oil, and Tires, all in one place. What a handy concept! And before Walmart or Costco! A closer look at the sign shows the rope that was used to raise the flag. You can easily imagine the storekeeper opening the doors in the morning and raising the flag to greet the day.

That just is not part of our typical shopping experience today. The sign itself is of a character typical in the 1930's and earlier. No enamel, no neon, and no Coca Cola!

And if old general stores are not enough, at the same exit you can visit Greycliff Prairie Dog Town State Park. Or explore the area where the great Greycliff Train robbery of 1893 occurred, just east of town.



A stop I especially liked was Reed Point (exit 392). There are half a dozen old buildings frozen in time, including a couple of grain elevators at the end of the main street. One thing for sure, when the **Great Montana Sheep Drive** is held September 6<sup>th</sup>, it will be a "hot time in the old town tonight!"

Big Timber is a metropolis compared to Greycliff and the vintage (1936) soda fountain there came at the very end of Yellowstone Trail days. But the sodas and sandwiches are still terrific. And the two young ladies behind the counter are masters at making the sodas, as well as great sandwiches. Ψ



## New Trail Maps and Web Site Coming Along

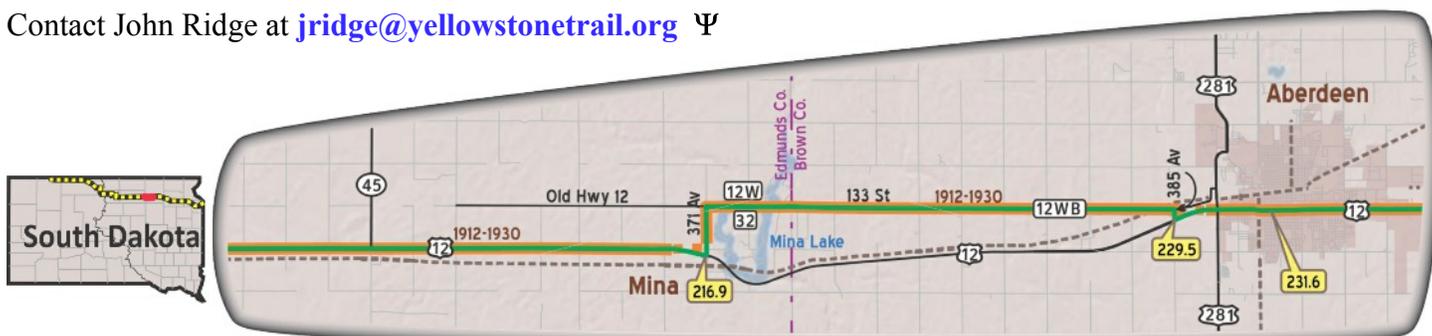
Soon you will have access to new maps of the Yellowstone Trail on a new web site. As John and Alice Ridge prepare their new book about the Trail they are drawing new maps showing the modern traveler how to follow the historic route in a series of about 114 regional maps and many city maps. While the maps are being prepared primarily for the book, they are being made available on the web for your reference. It is uncertain whether you will be able to print copies of the maps from the web site because of technical restrictions. Primary responsibility for the drawing of the maps, using the Ridges' research material, was undertaken by Sean Morrison, an intern from the Geography Department of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Starting this Fall, Sean will be a graduate student at Waterloo University in Ontario, Canada and John will return to being the responsible "map maker."

With the new maps, the Yellowstone Trail web site is being completely rebuilt. For the next few months, when you visit [www.yellowstonetrail.org](http://www.yellowstonetrail.org) you may well find strange goings-on but just about everything will be available somehow. The new maps will be available either from the old site or, for a while, at a "working site" at [www.yellowstonetrail.info](http://www.yellowstonetrail.info), a temporary address.

The maps you will find are not finished. They are drafts, but still the most accurate as any you can find but there are errors. During this coming winter we will be adding many corrections and twists and turns used for just some of the years of YT. You certainly may use the maps to explore the Trail, always remembering that many little changes will be made. Don't represent them as definitive – yet.

Review some of the maps and let us know about errors. Or just give us your thoughts about them. We really would like to know! And, suggestions for the emerging web site are very welcome.

Contact John Ridge at [jridge@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:jridge@yellowstonetrail.org) Ψ



## ON THE TRAIL...with Mark

### Memberships and Donations

The total paid membership The Yellowstone Trail Association has slowly increased in these past few years, hopefully due to our diligent efforts to spread the word about the Trail and with your great support. Your dues cover only the basics of our costs. Remember, no one is paid a salary, we are all volunteers. But we still have office supplies, postage and shipping costs, and occasional expenses for meetings and travel.

In order to do anything “special”, such as printing brochures, having YT stickers made, and producing the kiosk signs like the one shown on page 10 of this Arrow, we rely on your donations. Thanks to you, we are now able to get started on these projects, but even though we try to be very frugal, money is still tight. Don't forget us when you plan and make your annual tax-deductible donations. We promise to use it wisely. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

### My Annual Road Trip

I did not travel the Yellowstone Trail this year on my summer trip. Instead, I generally followed US Highway 20 and US Highway 30 from the Mississippi River to the coast of Oregon and back. I read a lot of historical stories and old road trip reports over the bleak winter months. That gives me a good historical background of areas I visit in the summer. This year, my thoughts were of homesteaders, pioneers, explorers, miners, lumberjacks, Native Americans, dinosaurs, cowboys, and buffalo herds. They all followed these routes.

I saw a lot of Iowa, Nebraska, Southern Wyoming, Central Idaho, and Oregon, and mostly avoided Interstates. Parts of these two venerable roads once served as the route of many famous “trails” that you may have heard of. How about the Lincoln Highway? Oregon Trail? Mormon Pioneer Trail? Or, the Lewis & Clark Trail. There are more nearby: California Trail, Butterfield Stage Coach Line, Pony Express and a few more lesser-known ones.



*Mark Mowbray at the Flaming Gorge*

Then there are the Scenic Byways, Rustic Roads, and other modern designated routes, like the Flaming Gorge Scenic Loop, Bootlegger Trail, Columbia River Parkway, Dinosaur Trail, Scenic 101 on the Oregon coast, and the Payette River Byway. Wow! I drove so many historic roads in my 29 days and 6,000 miles that I had a difficult time keeping track of which ones I was on at any given time. Some days I had the route of three or four historic routes under my wheels at the same time.

Be sure to stop at local Visitors Centers along your drives in any state and ask about old roads, scenic routes, or modern designated routes in that area. There are more and more each year all across the country and historical auto travel is booming. Slow roads and small towns abound. Get out on the road and find them!

**YT Forum** - A reminder that our YT Forum is now open to anyone. If you have not yet visited, do it now. You have been missing out on lots of interesting topics and some great photos. <http://yellowstonetrail.ipbhost.com/>

**YT on Facebook** - We currently have over 425 followers on our Facebook page and if you are not one of them, again you are missing out. If you do not want to join FB, ask a friend or relative to log into it for you so that you can take a look at what it's all about. <https://www.facebook.com/YellowstoneTrail>

### Asking Again, Please Send us your YT news or story

We are always open to new topics and stories from new writers. Please write something for us about a memorable road trip, a roadside attraction, or YT news. Send photos too. Even if you feel that your writing skills are not good enough, take a chance, and we'll help.

How about letters to the editor? Send one to me and find out.

Mark Mowbray, YTA Executive Director, [mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org)

# Trail-O-Grams

Compiled by Alice Ridge and Mark Mowbray

## New YTA Board Member

We are proud to announce that **Dave Habura** has joined the YTA Board of Directors. Dave is a retired state official and community college president living in the Puget Sound area of Western Washington State with his wife Sheila.

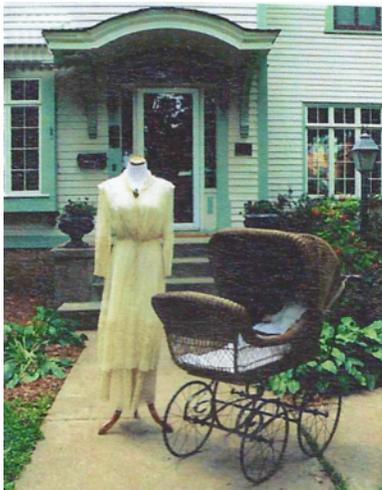
Dave has assembled one of the largest collections of vintage road maps and travel guides in the northwestern United States and he has traveled and reported on the Yellowstone Trail for at least 15 years.

He has been our Northwest Correspondent and Forum Moderator for the past two. Dave states “It is an honor to serve on the Board, and continue to learn from the experts.” Ψ



*Dave Habura at the Red Brick Road Kiosk in Redmond, WA*

**Hudson, Wisconsin**, a small town on the St. Croix River and the Yellowstone Trail has done it again! They held their annual Yellowstone Trail Heritage Days June 6-8 featuring some old favorites and expanded with new, creative family activities. This event is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society and many, many others.



The group is to be congratulated upon keeping focused on the Trail era of 1912-1930, especially with the era-correct fashion show. The brilliant idea of the fashion show was to display some of the fashions on manikins on the porches of the historic homes from whence the fashions actually came, 100 years ago! Fortunately, most of the historic homes are grouped on Third Street, the Yellowstone Trail.

Favorites of the Heritage Days were back: the antique car show; the cemetery walk to six graves, conducted by costumed interpreters; the Octagon House, pride of the St. Croix County Historical Society, was decked out with “Flapper” costumes on the front porch and a new public rest room (a.k.a. the “necessary”) in the back; and our favorite, the pie and ice cream social.

New activities this year, which may have been carried on 100 years ago, were a bee keeping/honey demonstration and Yellowstone Trail era games for children. The antique cars were invited to participate in the Slow Race to see who could keep their 2 and 4 cylinder Tin Lizzies running the slowest. The downtown history walking tour and geocaching beginning at Dick’s Bar and Grill (in an original Yellowstone Trail building!) were just some of the many things that made this weekend a wowser! What will they think of next year? Ψ





*Ribbon cutting in Granger, WA*

**Granger, Washington**, on the Yellowstone Trail’s southern route (1915-1925) had a bang-up event March 28 when they dedicated a .6 mile stretch of the Trail that ran through their town. The day included unveiling of six Yellowstone Trail signs, a ribbon-cutting, refreshments, and talks by the historical society president, Helen Dodd and Mayor Gary Anderson. A short procession of old vehicles on the Trail followed. “ Our section of the trail will be dedicated to the Jaquish family, who came from Wisconsin via the Yellowstone Trail in the early 1920s and became community leaders...and all others who followed the Yellowstone Trail to settle in Granger,” said Pam Fleming, event coordinator.

Ron Fleming, a mover and shaker of the project, said that the inspiration for marking the Trail began after nearby town, Zillah, had marked its portion of the Trail and Sunnyside, another nearby town, was mulling the prospect.

Grandview, another small town in the area, lost its original Yellowstone Trail pavement to “progress” recently, but citizens saved the “pour date” piece of concrete set by the contractor in 1918 and placed it in the R. E. Powell Museum in Grandview.



The Trail came to Granger from Sunnyside and Grandview in the east. Unfortunately, I-82 cut the Trail off near Granger. The dedicated .6 of a mile section runs from I-82 exit to the overpass and continues on Yakima Valley Highway toward Zillah.

Some readers may shrug and say that they, too, had marked their even larger portion of the Trail. The difference here is that this community recognized that a small part of the Trail still existed in their midst in spite of its almost complete demolition by an Interstate. They overcame what might easily have been overlooked.

We congratulate Granger citizens for their efforts in preserving the memory of this national treasure! Ψ



Well, tiny **Hamlet, Indiana**, has done it again! For the fifth year running they have sponsored Yellowstone Trail Fest (August 15-16). This year they specialized in the years 1912-1930, the dates of the Yellowstone Trail Association. They have even caught the eye of the Chicago Post-Tribune. Bernadette Manuel, Juanita Ketcham and many more worked together to get a car show/parade on the Trail through town, strolling minstrels dressed in early 1900s-style outfits, a 5K

run/walk on the Trail, square dancing and an ice cream social. Newer entertainments like 3 on 3 basketball, wrestling and sculptures made out of recycled car parts also entertained. Sept. 1 they met to plan the 2016 bash. Now that’s commitment! Ψ



**Fremont, Wisconsin**, once again put on its annual Yellowstone Trail Festival sponsored by the Optimist Club. The weekend of August 21-23 was jammed with fun. Related to the Trail, were the old car show and parade on the Trail, horse-drawn wagon rides and 5K slow walk/fun run. Related to the era of 1915 (when the Trail reached Wisconsin) to 1930 was a Scarecrow contest and pie contest. Yes, they had scarecrows during that era, and many a housewife entered pies in the county fairs. Newer entertainments were helicopter rides, crafts and a pumpkin race in the Wolf River. Children's pet parade and baking contest rounded out the schedule. Ψ



*Historic Hotel Fremont on the Yellowstone Trail*

**The Township of Byron, Wisconsin** celebrated 100 years of the Yellowstone Trail with a Centennial Parade on August 29, 2015. Rain did not dampen the spirit of the participants and spectators.



*Doug and Cindy Decker carried the banner*



*Grand Marshal Margaret Kelroy Schmitz was escorted along the parade route by Matt Michels who drove the classic Buick owned by his dad, Kevin.*



*Curt Kindschuh's vintage delivery truck*



*Green Valley 4-H Float*

Grand Marshal Margaret Kelroy Schmitz, who was born on a farm along the Yellowstone Trail in 1916, started the parade of vintage bicycles, cars and trucks, tractors, and floats and vehicles from organizations and businesses saluting the Yellowstone Trail. Parade spectators lined both sides of Highway 175 in the village of Byron to cheer them on. Ψ



**Yellowstone Trail in the News!**

We are signed up for Google News alerts, which sends us an email when a newspaper article or TV news segment features the YT. Here are a few:

**6/1/2015 -The Missoulian**, Missoula, Montana [http://missoulian.com/lifestyles/hometowns/paul-fugleberg-yellowstone-posed-real-challenges-years-ago/article\\_50e6de24-b315-57e5-8ee2-91cac16ea8f7.html](http://missoulian.com/lifestyles/hometowns/paul-fugleberg-yellowstone-posed-real-challenges-years-ago/article_50e6de24-b315-57e5-8ee2-91cac16ea8f7.html)

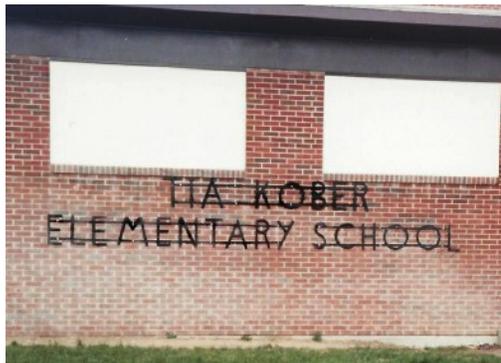
**6/3/2015 - Daily Sun News**, Sunnyside, Washington <http://www.dailysunnews.com/news/2015/jun/02/new-sunnyside-park-utilizing-historic-yellowstone-/>

**8/14/2015 - Chicago Tribune, Post-Tribune Indiana News** - Had a on-line subscriber only article highlighting the YT in Indiana and the local YT festivals.

## Let Them Eat Cake

By Alice Ridge, ridgeaa@yellowstonetrail.org

Faithful readers will recall that **Tia Kober** and **Fritzi Idleman**, longtime YTA members from Montana, appeared in the last *Arrow* because of their fame as the best ever angel food cake bakers. Montana Quarterly Magazine and Montana public television spread the word. Well, there is more than cake to these ladies.



Before they retired to their kitchen, they were school teachers.

There is now a Tia Kober Elementary School in Whitehall, Montana (on the Trail) named for a very creative Tia who showed the kids how to make butter by shaking cream in a jar, then showed them how to grind wheat and make bread to go with the butter. Then they made ice cream. Even the lye soap turned out so successfully that the kids' moms wanted

the recipe. How's that for class participation?!

The sisters are first generation Americans from a family who "fled their roots from Volga, Russia for something better." Fritzi says that "Mom made lots of angel food cakes in an old wood/coal stove and we are still shocked and stunned that she did, as she couldn't read English for a long time. We kept Mom's legacy alive by making angel food cakes and sharing them. I'm sure we've given away over 2,000 cakes since we've retired —graduation, anniversary, sheet, and birthday. It was not unusual to have six cakes hanging from Coke bottles by 6:30 or 7:30 in the morning." If the Coke bottle reference is strange to you, check with your grandmother!



Four cakes given for a fund raiser raised \$800! Fritzi confesses that "When we were short of eggs (each cake takes 12 eggs), a dear friend had an egg farm so we got cases of 'cracks' to keep us busy." Tia and Fritzi appreciate history to a degree not met by most of us. They helped with the building of the Museum of the Beartooths in Columbus, Montana, (on the Yellowstone Trail) by joining the painting crew at 6:00AM and donating cakes for their fund-raising raffle.

An opportunity to meet history face to face was theirs when they learned that the farm they grew up on was the place where William Clark, of Lewis and Clark fame, stopped with his men to dig out canoes to continue down the Yellowstone River. "I felt so proud to walk on ground that Mr. Clark had walked, and where they hauled everything to the Northwest. To be enriched in history is uncanny for people's children who fled their roots."

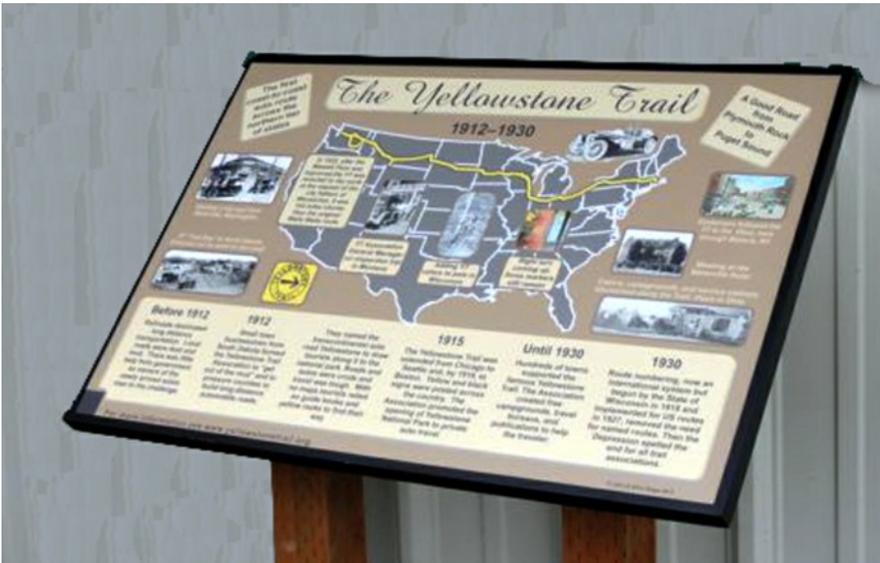
As for the Yellowstone Trail, Fritzi says, "We still walk or drive on it as it follows the Big Ditch on our grandparents' place. Dad went to the various fields via the Trail. To think that we can walk or ride on this road that connected our country between the two oceans and that we even knew people who worked on it. I was born in 1928 when the Trail was only about 16 years old." Ψ

Join with us – just \$15/year  
**Yellowstone Trail Association**  
"A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"  
Drive the Trail  
Explore History  
www.yellowstonetrail.org  
info@yellowstonetrail.org  
Facebook icon  
YELLOWSTONE TRAIL logo

## [An Opportunity: Interpretive Signs for the Yellowstone Trail](#)

As introduced in the last *Arrow*, we now are ready to begin! Members and friends have donated some funds and the YT Association has saved up membership fees enough for a great project: the **Interpretive Sign Fund**. In years past the membership fees just covered *Arrow* printing and postage cost but the online distribution of the *Arrow* gives us some financial leeway.

The goals of the Yellowstone Trail Association, as stated in its mission statement, include “to increase public knowledge of the Trail and its importance in both local and national history.”



The Association is undertaking this new project in support of those goals. To get information about the Trail available across the country, the Association will provide support for the installation of interpretive signs along the Trail in parks, information bureaus, museums, and any place that is visited by travelers or locals.

The Association has designed an interpretive informative sign and, as a not-for-profit association we can purchase high quality signs from a state prison shop, the shop that provides many information and interpretive signs for parks, historic sites, and the like.

We cannot do it alone. We need local partners. The association will work with you, with any friend of the Trail, to acquire and install signs anywhere along the Trail. The local partner will (minimally) provide a site or arrangements for the site for the sign, provide two treated posts, and mount the sign on the posts. The local partner must provide ongoing inspections and maintenance of the sign.

The Association will support the cost of the sign and provide the design and manufacture of the sign. However, contributions from the partners of some part of the cost will be appreciated and will allow more signs to be placed. The content of the sign can be modified to meet local situations.

The total cost of each interpretive sign will be in the neighborhood of \$650. We encourage you to contact us if you can propose a partner or if you want to donate any amount to support the project!

Send an email to Mark Mowbray [mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org) or to John Ridge [jridge@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:jridge@yellowstonetrail.org) If:

1. You have questions
2. You can suggest a location for a YT interpretive sign
3. You can suggest a person or group who might want to partner to install a sign.
4. You would like to support the project with a gift of any size.
5. You would like to help promote the project in your area.

Here is a chance for us to work together to get the word out across the nation from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound! Ψ

## Yellowstone Trail Interpretive Sign Donation

About two years ago Al Nuckolls from Washington donated substantially to the Yellowstone Trail Association. The officers decided to put the money to a memorable use. And so the outdoor Yellowstone Trail interpretive sign at the Douglas County Museum in Waterville, Washington became real. That started the officers thinking: how can the Association help others mark the Trail with an educational sign. The idea of establishing an Interpretive Sign Fund Project was born. The money placed in that fund would be dedicated to supporting local backers to acquire a permanent interpretive YT sign.



Now we have the first major donor to that established fund, **Greg Childs (left) of Laurel, Montana**. Greg calls himself “just an old-highway enthusiast with a collection of old cars.” Greg is no stranger to the Trail having traced it across South Dakota and western Minnesota. He even keeps a Yellowstone Trail sign in his driveway although he lives a mile from the Trail.

The Yellowstone Trail Association thanks Greg for his thoughtfulness in helping others learn about this national treasure through interpretive signs.

Now, who will step forward to partner with the Association to find that great location for an interpretive sign and coordinate its installation? Ψ

## Mystery Rock

By Dave Habura, YT Northwest Correspondent

A good history mystery is always fun, and the **Museum of the Beartooths** in Columbus, Montana, on the Yellowstone Trail, has a great one to offer. I dropped in to learn more about the area west of Billings that is dotted with small towns along the Trail. The museum is one of the nicest I have visited in some time, and is a great stop for families. The exhibits are outstanding and the staff friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. There is a large outside grassy fenced area complete with a caboose that will give youngsters a little room to burn off some energy.



Penny, the Executive Director, and Kay, a local expert on area history showed me a recently discovered 8” x 13” stone carved with the date 1841 AD. Fishermen had found it on the Stillwater River and Museum staff had helped recover it.

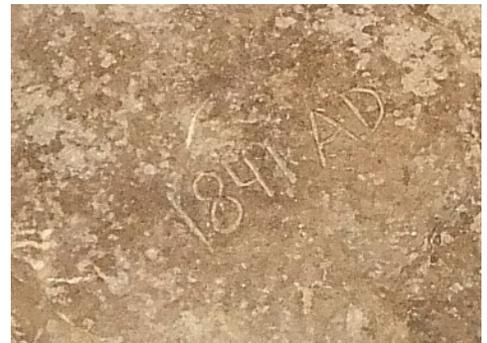
I wish I were more knowledgeable in Montana history, but I do know that the earliest American /European settlement in what is now the state, was considerably west, at St Mary's Mission south of Missoula.

The famed Catholic priest Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet founded the mission in 1841 (!), but that was 250 miles to the west as the crow flies. It was the first permanent settlement by Europeans in Montana.

Perhaps one of our readers will have a better idea than I do of who might have done the carving. My reasoning is that it was one of three possible unknown people: a soldier, fur trapper, or a member of the De Smet party.

The site where the stone was found is over 150 miles from the closest military outpost of the time (Ft Van Buren 1835-42), so imagining a soldier carving the date in a big rock 150 miles from his base isn't my first guess. It is impossible to rule out a fur trapper or hunter. But by this time the fur trade had shifted from beaver (river / stream based) to hunting buffalo (plains based), and it would seem that the Stillwater River would not be the place for buffalo hunting. That obviously doesn't rule out a trapper, but it makes it less likely....in my definitely inexpert view.

So given the date, is it possible that this was carved by a Catholic in the Pierre-Jean De Smet party? Let me add a question that may be significant. Who adds AD to a year? On a rock in the wilderness? Who perceives a date as AD? A priest? Or part of a priest's party on the way to establish a Catholic Mission It takes extra effort to carve AD in stone!! That is an important addition only if it is important to the person who carved it.



De Smet was in Three Forks west of Columbus in 1840, and returned from there to St Louis. He set out again from St Louis in May 1841 and arrived at what was to become St Mary's in September, 1841. Scholars must know the approximate route he followed. The Yellowstone Trail and later I-90 follow "natural" travel corridors to St Mary's, which would have taken De Smet to St Louis and back.

Could this stone, discovered not far from the Yellowstone Trail, and now in the Museum of the Beartooths, be an artifact of the first European settlement in Montana, and left by one of the most famous of early missionaries? I have piled speculation on top of uncertainty. But I don't think entirely without some basis. Ψ

## Other Trails?

In our last Arrow, we asked you if you knew anything about the "Black & Yellow Trail" in Minnesota. One of our members (an obvious old-road buff), Bill von Tagen, sent an informative reply and he shared this website from the US Department of Transportation: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/us14.cfm> Thanks Bill, we appreciate your help. We'll try to work up an article on it soon.

Another sharp-eyed member who was riding his Harley to Sturgis, Leo Udee, reported sighting a sign in in Ortonville, Minnesota for the "King of Trails" that trail appears to be a North / South route.

OK readers, see what you can learn about it and send me your results. [mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org)

<b>JOIN THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION!</b>																						
Use this form and mail with a check OR Apply at <a href="http://www.yellowstonetrail.org">www.yellowstonetrail.org</a> and use either the <a href="#">online form with PayPal</a> or the <a href="#">mail-in form with a check</a> .																						
<p><b>APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____</p> <p>An e-mail address is required because the <i>Arrow</i> newsletter is sent via email. If you need yours printed we'll make special arrangements.</p> <p>e-mail address : _____</p> <p>Phone: _____ (Required if you do not use email.)</p> <p>If this membership is for a business or organization:</p> <p>Organization: _____</p> <p>Your Position: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">VISIT <a href="http://WWW.YELLOWSTONETRAIL.ORG">WWW.YELLOWSTONETRAIL.ORG</a></p>	<p>Cut off and mail this form with your payment. OR apply online at <a href="http://www.yellowstonetrail.org">www.yellowstonetrail.org</a></p> <p>Send to: Treasurer Yellowstone Trail Association 340 Division Street North Stevens Point, WI 54481</p> <p><b>Membership category and annual dues:</b></p> <p>Check one: _____ Regular (Individual or small business) ----- \$15</p> <p>_____ Not for profit (museum, car club, historical) ----- \$25</p> <p>_____ Tourism Promotion Agency ----- \$50 (C of C, CVB, Econ Development, similar)</p> <p>_____ Corporate (Contact the Exec. Director for sponsorship details. <a href="mailto:mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org">mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org</a>) \$100</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Enter Amounts:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Dues for 1 year (June -May) -</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px;">\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gifts are tax deductible.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Dues for 2nd year -</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px;">\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Same rate. Optional.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Additional contribution -</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px;">\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">We are a nonprofit 501c3 corporation.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: right;"><b>Total =</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px;">\$ _____</td> </tr> </table>	Enter Amounts:	Dues for 1 year (June -May) -	\$ _____		Gifts are tax deductible.			Dues for 2nd year -	\$ _____		Same rate. Optional.			Additional contribution -	\$ _____		We are a nonprofit 501c3 corporation.			<b>Total =</b>	\$ _____
Enter Amounts:	Dues for 1 year (June -May) -	\$ _____																				
	Gifts are tax deductible.																					
	Dues for 2nd year -	\$ _____																				
	Same rate. Optional.																					
	Additional contribution -	\$ _____																				
	We are a nonprofit 501c3 corporation.																					
	<b>Total =</b>	\$ _____																				