

THROUGH YELLOW STONE NATIONAL PARK AWHEEL

It was a cold, cloudy day, with a healthy breeze blowing from the snow-capped "Little Belts," that a friend and myself left the little shanty "way out on the prairie," northwest of Harlowton, Montana, in the latter days of July, 1911, headed for the Yellowstone National Park. "An even hundred miles to Gardiner City," we were told by those who claimed to know, but one who had been there would not venture an opinion of the distance.

For many days we two had discussed the matter as to whether the sights would be worth the cost and inconveniences of the trip.

My ideas regarding the size and grandeur of this place of mystery, science and beauty, which belongs as much to the poorest as to the most wealthy, where money is forgotten as well as "class" and where everything is as free to the humble toiler who perchance has saved up money enough to reach the border and fit himself out with a blanket and a week's grubstake while he walks through the park carrying his camp on his back, were vague indeed and we were wholly unprepared for what we found.

Before we reached the northern entrance the "even hundred" miles had lengthened into one hundred and sixty-three miles. Our first day's ride carried us to Big Timber, Montana, where we first saw the Yellowstone river, swollen by melting snows and almost red with mud. The same day we traveled twenty-four miles up the river and camped on its banks. Our camp outfit consisted of two double blankets, a frying-pan, a stew kettle and two fishing rods, bacon, coffee, salt and a six shooter. Each of us carried part of the pack on a carrier fastened to the frame of our wheel and extending out in front. Next morning, when nine miles from Livingstone, Montana, I broke the fork of my bike flush with the top of the frame and had to walk into town, which with the time it took to repair the wheel, cost us about seven hours' time and \$10. That evening we rode from Livingstone twenty-three miles up the Yellowstone canyon. Livingstone, Montana, is on the main line of the Northern Pacific railroad, which runs a branch line fifty-five miles to Gardiner City, Montana, the northern entrance to the park. Livingstone is the headquarters of most of the park transportation companies and is where the tourist guides meet tourists and organize their trips.

I had another accident after leaving Livingstone which left my rear tire flat and resulted in our traveling by train to Gardiner. This canyon is itself worth taking a long trip to see. There are some warm springs enroute, most of which are used by sanitariums, and from Livingstone to Gardiner the rocky walls are perforated by paint and Portland cement mines. There are many farms and a few small towns along the way, and if you like hunting or fishing, camp awhile and take a side trip up one of the side streams. "Deer flies" and "green heads" make good fishing bait and are easily captured. Just sit still for a few minutes with the left hand extended palm down. When two or three flies have gathered together with one accord and get to quarreling as to which gets the next bite, bring the right palm down with all the force you can and you've got good bait enough for three or four magnificent rainbow trout.

We arrived at Gardiner City about 10 a. m. and immediately proceeded to stock up with four days' provisions, and being unable to get any bicycle repairs, we passed through the entrance arch and walked the first mile to where the road strikes the Gardiner river, a beautiful mountain torrent. Here we rested for an hour and ate a lunch. Then on towards the Mammoth Hot Springs and Fort Yellowstone. We found the road macadamized and equal to Forest Grove pavement. Every half mile was a tank of water and a large road sprinkler goes over the road two or three times daily. In many places water is brought for a mile or more and raised several hundred feet by means of hydraulic rams, for sprinkling the road.

It must be remembered that Uncle Sam keeps up this park "for the pleasure and enjoyment of the people" and everything is made as pleasant as possible.

We passed a spire of rock on the top of which is a huge eagle's nest, and several American eagles were circling around. Five miles from Gardiner is Fort Yellowstone, the Mammoth Hot Springs, the Buffalo corral and a fine camp ground. It would take two or three days to see the sights grouped within a radius of a couple of miles, but the grass is good and plentiful, so pitch your tent, hobble your horses, strap on your kodak and start out. First you will go to Fort Yellowstone, register and surrender any firearms you may have. Then you will take in the hot springs formations, or part

of them. At six o'clock you will be down to the buffalo corral getting a snapshot of the last remnant of the American bison. When you have finished the sights adjacent to your camp, you will move probably to Willow creek. This trip takes you through the "Hoodooos," a mystic jumble of silver colored rocks suggestive of ghosts and bogoblins, even the skeletons of a few trees scattered here and there among the jumbled mass (dead for no man knows how long) resemble the bony frames of departed spirits. The "Silver Gate" is probably the greatest single attraction among the "Hoodooos."

As you travel, each mile is marked by a milepost, giving the distance both ways to the nearest great attractions. Each attraction is named and pointed out by sign posts. Each campground is located in the same way.

After leaving the "Silver Gate" you enter Willow Creek Canyon, where you get a specimen of good roads and how they are sometimes built, as you pass through the "Golden Gate." Then you come out in a beautiful broad basin. The "Electric Peaks" loom up to the right. Here the scenery won't interest an Oregonian much, but the fishing in Willow Creek might, also the wild strawberries which ripen in July and August. Farther on you come to the "Appollinarius" spring. "Devil's Dream" is just as appropriate and easier remembered. It takes a couple of drops of lemon juice to get the full effect of the variegated taste of this water.

We did not stop at Willow creek, but traveled up it several miles to where the fishing looked good. Here near a mountain of real glass we cast our flies time and again without result. Tiring of this, we filled up on strawberries and rode on to a camp ground and stopped to get supper. My friend started to build a fire and I went to the creek to get a drink. I got it, and you bet it was boiling hot. It was the same stream we had fished in. Near here we found a couple of lakes, Twin Lakes they are called. The water was clear as crystal and the rock in the bottom was blue as indigo. We were now in the hot springs region and soon came to Roaring Mountain, a high hill, from base to peak of which issued numberless springs of stinking, boiling water. It made a fellow feel like he had business in another country.

We were soon in the Norris Geyser Basin, and here is another place to camp a day or two. There is a dandy camp a mile from the geyser basin with corrals and a fine spring. Among the hot springs paths are marked out and each spring is named. Among the most prominent is Black Growler, a spring of recent origin. It makes a noise like the bulldog at two a. m. and its fumes are deadly poison. All the trees and grass within reach of its vapors are dead.

We rolled our blankets under the trees between the geysers, where the mosquitos were fewer, and came near being trampled out of sight by a band of elk browsing on the brush and scant grass.

Now you have traveled down the "handle" of the "frying-pan," as the route most traveled by tourists and campers is called, and are ready to circumnavigate the bowl. The usual route is to the right across Gibbon Meadows where you may choose to camp for a week, then down Gibbon River, a beautiful canyon lined with curious springs and fountains, almost to the junction of the Gibbon and Firehole rivers, where is the road to Yellowstone, Montana, the western entrance to the park. Yellowstone is on the Oregon Shortline railroad. Then you cross a wooded plateau which Uncle Sam has not yet got water on for sprinkling.

This plateau is about six miles across to where the road strikes the Firehole river at the Firehole cascades. Drive up or down that river a short distance, pitch your tent and string up that crack fishpole you are so proud of, for the water is as clear as crystal and lousy with rainbow trout. Take along your camera too, you will need it.

You will soon reach the Lower Geyser Basin, in which is located the Great Fountain Geyser, whose crater is about thirty feet in diameter and plays from thirty to forty minutes every 25 to 30 days. The Lower Basin is good for four or five days' explorations. The Mammoth Paint Pots are perhaps the greatest curiosity. Six or seven different colors of soft paint bubbling and sputtering up all the time like a pot of boiling mush, and all within a few feet of each other. Next comes the Middle Basin with the Excelsior Geyser as a big attraction. We saw the Upper Basin with the Riverside Geyser in the foreground and Old Faithful in the distance both in full play, from nearly a mile away. Riverside plays once every seven hours for about twenty to thirty minutes. When not in eruption it is the most innocent looking hole in the ground you ever saw. When in eruption it plays about one hundred and fifty feet at about seventy degrees and the water falls back into the Firehole river. The Upper Basin has almost numberless hot springs, mineral springs and geysers. Old Faithful, perhaps the most noted geyser in the park, plays for about ten minutes every 65 or 70 minutes the year around. The stream sometimes reaches nearly two hundred feet and is about three feet in diameter. You will want to camp at the Upper Basin for at least a week. At the garbage dump back of the Old Faithful

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Inn bears may be seen at most any time. The big old grizzlies are about as tame as dogs and will open a can of fruit, beans, etc., quicker than you can with an opener. From the Upper Geyser Basin the road follows the Firehole river to its source at the Continental Divide. Here is Two-Ocean Lake. The road crosses (Continued on fifteenth page.)

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