

MORE THAN MERE CAMPS AND COACHES: THE WYLIE CAMPING COMPANY
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MIDDLE-CLASS LEISURE ETHIC IN
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, 1883-1916

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the influences of tourism upon the American West and its relationship with Yellowstone National Park in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, this inquiry investigates the development and evolution of the Wylie Camping Company in Yellowstone and the company's connection with the advancement of tourism to the American West. Furthermore, within the context of changing ideas of work and leisure time in the past two centuries, this study explores the advancement of the idea of nature appreciation in America, and the interaction of Yellowstone's tourists with the natural environment. Through a cultural lens this examination aims to illuminate an understanding of tourists' complex emotional, physical, and ideological encounters with the mythic West and the equally fabled Yellowstone. With an eye on nineteenth-century middle-class cultural ideals, this study provides insight into the stagecoach-era tourists' experience of Yellowstone with the Wylie Camping Company. Finally, drawing on archival documents, published literature, and unpublished photo collections, this thesis demonstrates that the Wylie Camping Company played an important role in the establishment of Yellowstone as a legendary tourist destination and in the creation of a model of touring that set a precedent for camping and touring operations in other national parks around the West. To date there is no existing study of the Wylie Camping Co. in Yellowstone National Park.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Almost every one who plans a visit to Yellowstone Park hears something more or less definite about the “Wylie” tour. Those fortunate travelers who investigate its merits, and join one of our daily parties, enjoy the greatest scenic trip of their lives and return to their homes rejoicing that “Wonderland” belongs to America.”¹

“Wonderland” a moniker promoted by the Northern Pacific Railroad in the 1880s to portray an image of the western lands along its route, lured thousands of nineteenth and early twentieth century travelers to the American West. Wonderland as touted by railroad promotional brochures, expressive travel accounts, and scores of scenic photographs and stereo views conjured up images of surreal sights, sounds, smells, and experiences not only of Yellowstone but of the mythic American West. The establishment of Yellowstone as a major scenic attraction and a renowned tourist destination was shaped not only by the historical processes of the period but also through the active role of American and European culture in the construction of romantic perceptions of nature, intellectual awareness of social consciousness, and the creation of a middle class leisure ethos.²

¹ A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1908), 2.

² For example see Olin Wheeler, *Wonderland 96* (St. Paul: Northern Pacific Railway, 1896); William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In*, Vols. 1 and 2 (New York: D. Appleton, 1872-74); Thomas Dowler Murphy, *Three Wonderlands of the American West* (Boston: L.C. Page, 1912); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963); Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991); William A. Gleason, *The Leisure Ethic: Work and Play in American Literature, 1840-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a refined middle-class society began to emerge in America fostered by the growing prosperity of industrialization. The industrial revolution had shifted the production of wealth from agriculture to manufacturing, resulting in a rise in personal income and an increase of leisure time. Even though this wealth was not distributed evenly throughout all levels of society, the rise in national wealth gave more people money to spend on material goods and cultural experiences, especially the emerging American middle class.

Brenda Jackson in *Domesticating the West: The Re-creation of the Nineteenth-Century American Middle Class* contended that this era, often referred to as the Market Revolution, “greatly upset the traditional class structure as it introduced the concept of upward mobility—the notion that individuals could move up the social ladder through diligence and hard work.”³ The new commercial environment created by the Market Revolution produced a need for clerical and managerial level personnel who formed the new American middle class. While the term *middle class* typically personified an economic classification, it also identified a social lifestyle that in time would include travel and leisure.

By the late nineteenth century, travel had become more than a fashionable means to display social and economic differentiation; it had become an American cultural convention of identity. While many of America’s “upper crust” traveled to romantic places to display their wealth, middle-class travel habits were “linked to [a] cultural

³ Brenda Jackson, *Domesticating the West: The Re-creation of the Nineteenth-Century American Middle Class* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 23.

significance of lifestyle.”⁴ In other words, a middle-class philosophy of travel encompassed cultivating perspectives, which focused on values, codes of conduct, and self-improvement. From this viewpoint their motivations could be deemed social rather than economic. The middle class strove to experience a more multifaceted interaction with life that contained leisure activities offering a moral rationalization. In this vein travel to nationally symbolic places such as Yellowstone gave the middle-class tourist a landscape in which one could experience a “structure of feeling that was both the expression and legitimization of middle-class behavior and ideals.”⁵

Because of its role as a symbolic as well as a cultural tourist destination, Yellowstone National Park was and is vastly significant to tourism in the West. But in order to understand the creation of Yellowstone as travel destination and subsequently as a celebrated cultural landscape we must assess how Yellowstone, as well as how the American West, was perceived and utilized by a travel-for-pleasure society. Since perception and utilization are culturally subjective experiences it becomes necessary to examine the desires, beliefs, attitudes, habits, and values of this contemporaneous American leisure travel culture.

Immediately some questions come to mind. Why did people want to see the West and Yellowstone National Park? What cultural and social motivations fostered their desire to travel to Yellowstone and the American West? What were the origins of the construction of an American leisure class? What influenced middle-class attitudes of leisure? How influential was romanticism on literature and art and consequently tourism promotion?

⁴ Melanie Archer and Judith R. Blau, “Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of the Middle Class,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (August 1993), 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*

How did romanticism shape nature appreciation? How did nature appreciation connect with self-improvement? These represent only a few of the most important questions concerning the multi-layered cultural experiences of the nineteenth-century American leisure class.

Early concepts of tourist activities and experiences range from “a popular act of consumption and a contrived, prefabricated experience of mass tourism” to “an active response to the difficulties of modern life.”⁶ These theories subscribe to the idea that the needs for all tourists are uniform regardless of cultural or social background. Sociologist Erik Cohen puts forth an alternative theory of tourism, which argues that “different people need different experiences” and that the “meaning of the experience is derived from a person’s world view” as well as from the “individual’s spiritual center.”⁷ This concept illuminates some of the motivations of Yellowstone tourists who chose to tour the park with the Wylie Camping Company. From this we learn that in a sense by traveling with a guided Wylie educational and interpretive tour, the American middle-class constructed their own manner of satisfying a wide range of individual desires for seeing Yellowstone, from pleasure to a search for meaning.

The search for meaning in this context incorporates the concept of human agency as an important basis of explaining the diversity of tourist activities. According to sociologist T. Bennett in his *Culture, Ideology, and Social Process*, “the diverse forms of human agency—the forms in which men and women think, feel, and act out their lives—

⁶ Yipping Li, “Geographical Consciousness and Tourism Experience,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 4 (October 2000): 864.

⁷Erik Cohen quoted in Li, “Geographical Consciousness and Tourism Experience,” 864.

are the product of cultural determination.”⁸ The experience of place requires an emotional connection as well as an intellectual connection and those connections are rooted in cultural and social identity. How did the Wylie Camping Company’s operation contribute to the balance between the ways of human agency and the structure of a middle-class leisure ethic?

While human agency is an important aspect in the analysis of tourism, class is a vital consideration in the analysis of leisure. The inclusion of this traditional Marxist category is not to suggest that everything is predetermined by the mode of production, but rather to underscore the power and control of the economic system. In this light, leisure became a marker of social status for the industrious middle-class. Did the Wylie operation help to create a subjective social consciousness and help to impart an ideological character to middle-class tourism and leisure in Yellowstone?

Prior to the Wylie system of touring the park via stagecoach and strategically located tent camps, economics controlled all modes of touring in Yellowstone National Park, and this touring favored society’s elite.⁹ With the development of his unique form of travel and accommodation, Wylie leveled the playing field by providing a pattern of tourism that offered a diversity of touring activities so that less privileged tourists to Yellowstone could meet their own social and cultural needs and create their own self-determined values of leisure, recreation, and nature.

Nature appreciation became one of the principles of nineteenth-century middle-class leisure society. A romantic philosophy of nature helped to create poetic definitions of

⁸ Tony Bennett, ed., *Culture, Ideology, and Social Process* (London: Batsford Ltd., 1981), 12.

⁹ For example, see Paul Schullery, ed., *Old Yellowstone Days* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1979).

America's western scenery that ranged from the beautiful to the sublime. In turn, the beautiful, the picturesque, and the sublime created emotional responses that became sources of inspiration. As principles of romanticism invoked a connection between feeling and consciousness, Yellowstone's accessible wilderness offered a more intensified experience of nature for middle-class tourists.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, productions of American literature and art concerning nature were profoundly influenced by romantics such as Samuel Coleridge and Thomas Cole. These literal and visual conceptions of nature created a romantic philosophy of nature that fashioned an esthetic characterization of scenery and a philosophical basis for the relationship of human beings to their natural world. Romantic literature along with concepts of deism, a philosophy that rejected the idea of divine revelation found in many organized religions, promoted the idea that beliefs of the existence of God must be based on human reason and on observed features of the natural world. The Romantic Movement promoted an interest in beautiful, picturesque, and sublime landscapes, which became vital elements of tourism in Yellowstone and the West. Through the lens of romanticism, the art and literature of human culture determined what represented scenic beauty. As an evolving middle class cultivated the values of feeling and imagination, romanticism helped to create associations of personal fulfillment that combined images, thoughts, and emotions with their Yellowstone touring experience.¹⁰

¹⁰ See for example, John Jakle, *The Tourist in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961); Hans Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1990); S.E. Demars, *The Tourist in Yosemite, 1855-1985* (Salt Lake City:

John Sears in his *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* examined Yellowstone's role in shaping tourism and the tourist experience in America. According to Sears, the visitor's experience with the wild nature of Yellowstone was quite different from that of the pastoral beauty of Yosemite. While the nation's natural wonders such as the "Eden" of Yosemite were considered its sacred places, Yellowstone's collection of nature's weirdest curiosities, including many that exhibited steamy vapors, aligned its identity with a lesser sacred place – Hell. This landscape of the strange and exotic beckoned the curious and adventurous of all means, but early Yellowstone visitors experienced primitive accommodations to match the primitive landscape. Touring the park by camp had originally begun as a necessity due to the lack of accommodations, but by 1893 camping enterprises such as the Wylie Camping Company had made "roughing it" in the "wilderness" a popular, novel, and economical form of touring Yellowstone.¹¹

How different cultural and intellectual mores play a part in the interpretation of a tourist landscape is the realm of the cultural and historical geographer. Donald Meinig suggests in his essay, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," that the diverse views of nature and landscape by several different tourists depend not only on "what lies before our eyes but what lies within our heads."¹² Individual cultural and

University of Utah Press, 1991); Kathleen Cordes and Hilmi Ibrahim, *Outdoor Recreation: Enrichment for a Lifetime* (Champaign: Sagamore Press, 2001).

¹¹ John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford Press, 1991), 1-11.

¹² Donald Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 34.

sociological beliefs, attitudes, and experiences help shape the meaning and value that tourists attach to landscapes and their experience of place.

Intellectual observations aside, emotional sensations and visual perceptions blend together to form and influence the tourist's experience of place. Yi-Fu Tuan in his *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* advises that there is an emotional connection between the physical environment and human beings. Those emotional connections are part and parcel with different cultural backgrounds and thus can be just one of the powerful forces codifying the experience of place.¹³

Geographical studies of human experience with worldly landscapes attach importance to the concept of geographical consciousness and the relationship it creates between people and places. Geographer Eric Dardel claims that "geographical science presupposes a world that can be understood geographically and also that man can feel and know himself to be tied to the Earth."¹⁴ In essence the world is geography, and human life is intrinsically tied to geography.

Accordingly, Jurgen Habermas's "life world" concept implies that all knowledge of this shared world is mediated by communication and interpretation, and thereby suggests that the growth of tourism in the American West and more specifically the growth of middle-class tourism to Yellowstone National Park is a reflection of the advancement of geographical, historical, and sociological consciousness.¹⁵ Expanding these perceptions of a "life world" through education and interpretation, middle-class values and codes of

¹³ Yi Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1974), 13-29.

¹⁴ Eric.Dardel quoted in Li, "Geographical Consciousness and Tourism Experience," 864.

¹⁵ Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. by Thomas McCartney (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1987), 1-9.

conduct, self-improvement and personal experience, economy and healthful-outdoor life became the nucleus of the Wylie Camping Company and the innovation of its founder William Wallace Wylie.

CHAPTER 2

WILLIAM WALLACE WYLIE: A MAN AND AN IDEA

“This little book is not offered as a scientific description of the National Park, nor is it written for an inducement to those who may read it to visit the Park, neither as a recital of the experiences of one who has visited this remarkable land...but to guide and aid the tourist in his rambles in Wonderland.”¹⁶ So began William Wallace Wylie in his 1882 book, *Yellowstone National Park; Or the Great American Wonderland, A Complete Hand, or Guide Book for Tourists*. Little did he know that this publication would lead him to his life’s work.

Wylie guided tourists through Yellowstone National Park beginning in 1883 with a moveable camping outfit that operated twice a month during the then three month-long summer season.¹⁷ Beginning in 1896 he pioneered an innovative tent-camping and transportation company at permanent locations throughout the Park, which he and his family operated until the end of the season in 1905. After selling his Yellowstone enterprise to A. W. Miles and Miles’s silent partner Harry Child, he maintained a guest ranch in the Spanish Peaks area of Bozeman’s Gallatin Valley, and later he established Yellowstone-type camping operations in Zion National Park, Utah, and on the north rim of Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. By the 1920s, Wylie’s name had become

¹⁶ W. W. Wylie, *Yellowstone National Park; or The Great American Wonderland* (Kansas City: Publishing House of Ramsey, Millett & Hudson, 1882), 3.

¹⁷ James A. Blanchard and George H. Lamar, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Brief in Support of Application*, Filed June 2, 1897 (Washington, D.C.: J.S. Tomlinson & Son, Printers, 1897), 8.

A.W. Miles, “A. W. Miles Describes the Wylie Way in his Conference Speech,” *Livingston Enterprise*, September 16, 1911.

famous in all three of these places and his novel business enterprise had been copied by numerous national park concessioners.

Professor Wylie, as he was affectionately called throughout the Yellowstone region, became widely known to a particular class of the populace who reveled in the picturesque scenery of Yellowstone National Park and who attended his lectures about education and industry. Appealing to a wide-ranging audience, he played an important role in the development of Montana's educational system and the advancement of the region's agricultural pursuits as well as in the promotion of western tourism. Categorically William Wallace Wylie's greatest contribution was his advancement of tourism in and to Yellowstone National Park, which combined his love of nature, innovation, and education.

Humble Beginnings

Born to Moses and Elizabeth (McCartney) Wylie on June 8, 1848 in New Concord, Ohio, William Wallace Wylie began his life of "honest worth and endeavor" under the tutelage of his "plain and simple" Scotch-Irish parents.¹⁸ Moses, a teacher and merchant in his early years, moved his family to Washington, Iowa in 1855, and then devoted the "greater portion of his active life to agricultural pursuits."¹⁹ Reared under the robust and bracing discipline of farm life, William began at an early age to understand both the rigors and the rewards of hard work. One of eight children, William was dependent on his own efforts to continue his education to the college level. He earned the money he

¹⁸ Moses was born on December 1, 1819 and Elizabeth was born on March 6, 1822. See A.W. Bowen and Company, *Progressive Men of the State of Montana* (Chicago: A.W. Bowen & Co., 1902), 974.

¹⁹ Moses and Elizabeth moved to Kansas in 1867 and then moved to Montana in 1898. See Bowen, *Progressive Men*, 974.

needed by teaching. After graduating from Lenox College in Hopkins, Iowa with the class of 1873, William continued teaching and became a principal and then city superintendent of schools in Delhi, Iowa by 1874.²⁰

On April 2, 1874, William married Mary Ann Wilson in her hometown of Independence, Iowa.²¹ Fifty years later while reminiscing with old friends who had gathered to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary, the Wylies both recalled that their wedding day was originally set for April 1, 1874, April Fool's Day. They also remembered it was not long before the jokers began to advise, "Better change the date" and the croakers to tease, "You'll be fooled badly enough, anyhow."²² Apparently either to heed the warnings of the croakers or to silence the jokers, Mary Ann Wilson became the bride of William Wallace Wylie on April 2. According to Mrs. Wylie, "I don't think it would have made a bit of difference if we had been married on April 1. We've been happy largely because we've been busy. I've noticed that folks who keep themselves busy don't have much occasion to hunt up the divorce court."²³ Indeed, through many years of this busy life, Mrs. Wylie was known as a "typical pioneer's wife, her head and hand supplementing his through every crisis and trial."²⁴ To be sure, from the beginning of their marriage William Wallace and Mary led eventful life.

²⁰ Bowen, *Progressive Men*, 974.

²¹ Mary Ann Wilson, born about 1855, was the daughter of Clinton and Elizabeth W. (Miller) Wilson, both natives of Ohio. Clinton was born on November 13, 1827 and Elizabeth was born on May 14, 1829. They moved to Iowa in 1854 and engaged in farming. In 1894, they moved to Montana. See Bowen, *Progressive Men*, 975.

²² Anonymous newspaper clipping from Elizabeth (Wylie) McKee's scrapbook in the possession of Martha (McKee) Kruger, Pine, Colorado.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

The Wylies' active and demanding lifestyle emerged from national economic changes in the early nineteenth century that altered occupational and social order. According to sociologists Melanie Archer and Judith Blau this was a result that “accompanied the growth of industrial-capitalism.”²⁵ America’s early nineteenth-century transportation and industrial revolution transformed the economy of the United States and subsequently its socioeconomic levels. A surge of technology and manufacturing answered the growing demands of a rapidly expanding national and international population for consumer goods and services. This epoch of economic as well as cultural growth significantly disrupted the traditional social class structure that up to that time consisted of the wealthy few on the top of the social hierarchy, the working or lower-class masses on the bottom, and the artisan, non-laboring, “middling sort” making up the in-between faction. While the notion of upward mobility—the idea that ordinary people could elevate their social status through diligence and hard work—had been around since the middle of the eighteenth century, this era set the stage for extensive redistribution of the social ladder. Echoing the sentiments of his nineteenth-century brethren, Reverend Calvin Colton, a Yale educated theologian who lectured frequently on republicanism in America, enthused, “Ours is a country where men start from [a] humble origin, and from small beginnings rise gradually in the world, as the reward of merit and industry.”²⁶ By the time

²⁵ Melanie Archer and Judith R. Blau, “Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century: The Case of the Middle Class, 18.

²⁶ Quoted in Brenda Jackson, *Domesticating the West*, 2. Jackson used Colton to illustrate societal mores in 1881. Reverend Calvin Colton (1789-1857) graduated from Yale University in 1812, studied theology at Andover, and was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry in 1815. By 1826, he had become disillusioned with the ministry as a thankless and frustrating profession and abandoned the pulpit. In 1831, he sailed for England and worked as a free-lance writer and part-time columnist for the *New York Observer*. Constant exposure to English criticisms of the United States compelled Colton to reflect at length on the nature and prospects of the American republican experiment. Colton frequently mounted both the pulpit and the

of his marriage in 1874, Wylie's social position in the field of education situated him within the processes of this social change, which led to the emergence of a distinct American middle class.

In 1875, Wylie held the position of principal of the public schools for one year in Hinsdale, Illinois, where his daughter Elizabeth was born on January 6, 1875. The family moved to Lyons, Iowa in 1876 where Wylie worked as the superintendent of instruction for three years. In his later years, Wylie recalled that "while serving as City Superintendent of the Public Schools of Lyons, Iowa in 1878, a gentleman accosted me while I was out horse-back riding, saying, 'How would you like to go to teach in the Rocky Mountain country?'"²⁷ This unidentified man told Wylie he was a merchant from Bozeman, Montana and that the school board was searching for a principal for their new school. Wylie apparently embraced the notion and applied for the job, as the June 27, 1878 *Bozeman Avant Courier* announced, "the services of W. W. Wylie...have been secured for the Bozeman Public school, and after the present term at Lyons is closed, Mr. Wylie will come to Bozeman in time to open our school in September next."²⁸

Knowing that the trip to Bozeman in September, 1878, would be an arduous one because the railroad at that time only went as far as northern Utah, Wylie left his pregnant wife, Mary and two small children in Independence, Iowa, presumably with her parents.²⁹ Arriving by rail in Ogden, Utah, Wylie then traveled forty more miles over a

lecture platform to proclaim "the truth" about life in America. See Alfred A. Cave, *An American Conservative in the Age of Jackson: The Political and Social Thought of Calvin Colton* (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1969), 3.

²⁷ W.W.Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 1926, Special Collections, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2.

²⁸ *Bozeman Avant Courier*, June 27, 1878.

²⁹ Son Fred was born February 17, 1877. See Bowen, *Progressive Men*, 975; United States Census 1900.

narrow gauge railroad, which terminated in Oneida, Idaho, a point just west of present day Arimo.³⁰ From that point Bozeman, Montana was still a five-hundred mile stage ride away, not a journey for the weak-at-heart as Wylie's stories of overturned stagecoaches and runaway horse teams attested.³¹

That following June, 1879, W.W returned to Iowa to bring his growing family to Montana. Rather than travel by railroad for his return to Iowa, W. W. chose to take the Gilmore and Salisbury stage to Fort Benton and from there travel by steamboat.³² Held up by a storm that "caused the adobe mud to so clutter the wheels of the coach," and so matt the horses' feet with mud and short bunch-grass that they could not travel, Wylie arrived at Fort Benton twenty-four hours late and found the steamboat already departed. Informed by the agent that "he had no idea when another boat would arrive," Wylie became dismayed at the thought of an extended stay in this, the "worst rowdy gambling town in the territory." But later that evening a steamboat whistle pierced the air and "all classes of the population flocked to the riverside to watch the boat round the bend" of the Missouri. After unloading supplies at Fort Assiniboine (a new army post located sixty miles downriver), an unexpected government boat stopped at Fort Benton to unload a few passengers. Wylie secured passage on the eastbound vessel.

Even though Wylie had been in Montana for nearly nine months he had yet to see a wild buffalo and inquired about the chances of seeing some on the trip. The clerk informed him that they would reach buffalo country very early in the morning and agreed

³⁰ Betty M. and Brigham D. Madsen, *North to Montana: Jehus, Bullwackers, and Mule Skinners on the Montana Trail* (Logan: Utah State University, 1998), 228; Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 2.

³¹ For stories, see Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 3-6.

³² Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 7.

to call Wylie when the animals were sighted. Aroused at three a.m., Wylie arrived on deck in time to see two bulls running along the river bank with one or two passengers shooting at them.³³ By eight o'clock a.m., there were so many buffalo in the river that the captain ordered the boat to be stopped and tied to shore, explaining to Wylie that without the weight of a load the steamer could possibly be overturned by the vast number of animals fording the river. Claiming that he had plenty of fresh meat on board, the captain also ordered the passengers to cease shooting at the swarm of animals in front of the boat. This massive river-crossing by buffalo continued throughout the day until late in the evening when the waterway once again became navigable and the steamboat could resume its journey. Wylie reported that according to a cattleman on board, they had witnessed the passage of nearly 20,000 buffalo on their migration route from the winter feeding grounds in Canada to the summer range in Montana. This sight of a buffalo migration across the Missouri River seemed to Wylie to be one of the last vestiges of West, and it proved to be unforgettable for him.³⁴

By the time of Wylie's trip to Iowa in 1879, the Northern Pacific Railroad had resumed³⁵ its westward movement. It reached the northern heart of buffalo country in

³³ This was not an uncommon sight in America for either steamboat or railroad travelers as illustrated by writer Theodore R. Davis in his article, "The Buffalo Range" published in the January 1869, issue of *Harper's Monthly*. He noted, "it would seem to be hardly possible to imagine a more novel sight than a small band of buffalo loping along within a few hundred feet of a railroad train in rapid motion, while the passengers are engaged in shooting from every available window, with rifles, carbines, and revolvers. An American scene, certainly."³³ In fact, the attraction of riding a train to view and shoot at stampeding buffalo herds quickly developed into advertised and promoted tourist excursions by the railroads, and this destructive activity became a favorite pastime of many mid-nineteenth-century sightseers. While progress had arrived on the plains, apparently civility had not.

³⁴ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 7-8.

³⁵ Due to the American economic panic of 1873, which caused the bankruptcy of Jay Cooke, the Northern Pacific Railroad stopped its building westward from 1873 to about 1878. For this history see M. John Lubetkin, *Jay Cooke's Gamble: The Northern Pacific Railroad, The Sioux, and The Panic of 1873*(Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2006).

Montana Territory in 1880. Glendive soon became the “Dodge City of the north” with its hundreds of buffalo hunters trading and selling thousands of hides. In addition, steamboats plied the Missouri River with huge loads of buffalo hides destined for east coast tanneries via the railroad. One newspaper reported that a single boat carried ten thousand hides and speculated that if there were “one thousand hides to three carloads ...it will take at least three hundred and fifty box-cars to carry this stupendous bulk of peltry East to market.”³⁶ Making his annual treks back to Iowa to visit family and friends, Wylie observed this phenomenon and remarked that “the buffalo hides were piled along the new Northern Pacific Railway in eastern Montana, like cord wood used to be along the Missouri river for steamboat use.”³⁷

This massive slaughter of the “monarch of the plains” greatly distressed Wylie, who recalled that many fur and hide buyers from Saint Louis wintered in Bozeman, Montana Territory in the winter of 1880. “During the slaughtering time of these herds” he lamented, “it was unpleasant to listen to the fur merchants talk about how many skinners a good marksman could keep busy.”³⁸ This might have been the beginning of Wylie’s reverence for nature and may partly explain how Yellowstone became Wylie’s place of nature devotion for nearly thirty-five years.

First Impressions

Wylie first became interested in the Yellowstone region in the summer of 1871 after

³⁶ *Sioux City Journal* May, 1881 quoted in David Dary, *The Buffalo Book: The Full Saga of the American Animal* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1989), 118.

³⁷ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 8

³⁸ *Ibid.*

reading an article in *Scribner's Monthly*, while he was in college.³⁹ The author, Truman Everts, a member of the 1870 Washburn expedition, recounted his personal adventure story of the thirty-seven days of peril that he experienced while lost in a wilderness region of Wyoming. The Wyoming wilderness that nearly cost Everts's his life would by 1872 become the world's first national park. For Wylie, the amazing tale of Everts's daring escapade in Yellowstone's untamed wilderness fired in him an ardent attraction to the West, eventually leading Wylie to his life's work, where he would combine his early agrarian training, life experiences, Christian values, and passion for education.

The onslaught of American industrialization in the nineteenth century collided with Jeffersonian values of individualism, self-reliance, and democratic integrity.⁴⁰ Americans responded to this geographic and cultural transformation of their landscape by creating the West as a region where respectable everyday life could dawn anew; hence the mythic West was born. While some historians scoff at the validity of the myth of the West, English author David Murdoch claims that the creation of the mythic "images and ideas [of] the West" is "America's greatest contribution to twentieth-century culture."⁴¹ According to Murdoch, the myth of the West served as a "functional myth" that allowed many Americans to symbolically act out social, cultural, and personal conflicts between their ideals and reality.⁴² Myth or not, new life or not, after reading the *Scribner's* article, William Wylie wanted to go West.

³⁹ Truman Everts, "Thirty-seven Days of Peril," *Scribner's Monthly* 3, no. 1 (November 1871): 1-17.

⁴⁰ David Murdoch, *The American West: The Invention of a Myth* (Reno: University of Nevada, 2001), 65.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 15.

However, there was a nine-year span of time between his awareness of Yellowstone and his opportunity to finally visit. In June of 1880, prominent Helena citizen Richard Lockey made a business trip to Bozeman. In addition to inspecting his mercantile interests, Lockey wanted to check on his mining claims in Cooke City via the park. Probably without much effort, Lockey enticed Wylie to join him on a trip to Yellowstone after the close of the school year. Borrowing one horse from an army officer at Fort Ellis and another from a Presbyterian minister, Wylie set out with Lockey for Yellowstone.⁴³ At that time tourist excursions into Yellowstone's wilderness required horses and mules; thus access was limited to heel and hoof. Upon reaching Mammoth Hot Springs, Lockey and Wylie encountered Philetus W. Norris, the second superintendent of park. Norris suggested that the two men reroute their trip to Cooke City and "go to the Geysers" using his "good road."⁴⁴ Norris assured them that they could cross Mary Mountain to Yellowstone River and then on to Tower Fall, and continue their trek to the Clark's Fork mining camps (Cooke City) located just outside the northeastern corner of the park.⁴⁵

Norris had been busily blazing trails and building roads with a small crew of men since the summer of 1878 when he first opened the road from Mammoth to Old Faithful. In 1872 Congress passed the law that established Yellowstone National Park but did not appropriate funds for a superintendent or for improvements such as roads. Nathaniel P.

⁴³ It is unknown on what date they left, but one could speculate that it was the end of June or perhaps even the beginning of July because the newspaper announced that Wylie's return from this trip was in early August. Further evidence may turn up in other newspapers at a future time.

⁴⁴ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 9.

⁴⁵ This was the trail that General O.O Howard and the U. S. army blazed in his pursuit of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians in the summer of 1877. This trail followed the creek that now bears the name Nez Perce Creek, continued up over Mary's Mountain, and down into Hayden valley and met the Yellowstone River near the "Mud Geysers," today's Mud Volcano. This route over Mary Mountain became part of the general horseback and then stagecoach tourist's itinerary until 1891, when the road from Old Faithful to West Thumb and on to Lake was cut through.

Langford served as first superintendent from 1872 to 1877 without a salary, which most likely explains his presence in the park only two or three times in five years. Concerns over vandalism caused by souvenir-hunting tourists were just one factor that prompted Congress to allocate money and hire Norris to preside over and improve the nation's park. With his meager salary, which he generously used to help pay his workers, and with an even smaller allowance for improvements, Norris worked fervently to make the park accessible. Many years later, Wylie fondly reminisced about Norris's road building and exploring:

It was very entertaining in those days to hear his workmen tell of what absurd predicaments he got them into in following his blazed trees. They said he would get lost, but would keep on blazing until he would come around to his lately blazed trees, thus causing them to make trails in circular form, often. In all my time in the park I never found so great an enthusiast over the park's various objects of interest. A hasty look over the park map will show many places or objects named "Norris." What Col. Norris did in the early days in opening ways through the park forests making accessible the various points of interest was simply wonderful, with almost no money to do it. Great credit should be given to his memory.⁴⁶

Many later Yellowstone road builders as well as western historians echoed Wylie's gratitude for Norris's accomplishments.⁴⁷ While his roads may not have been first-class productions, his efforts were nothing short of heroic in a day when road construction equipment consisted of steadfast horses, sharp axes, sturdy shovels, and the calloused hands of a few hardy men.

⁴⁶ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 10-11.

⁴⁷ Historians who have echoed the great accomplishments of Norris include Hiram Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park: Historical and Descriptive* (Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd Company, 1915); Aubrey Haines, *The Yellowstone Story* Volume 1 & 2 (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1996); and Lee H. Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone: Horse and Buggy Tour Guides* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).

Either convinced by Norris's testimony about his newly constructed "good roads" or just simply curious about the wonders that lay deep in the heart of the park, Wylie and Lockey altered their route to include Yellowstone's legendary geyser basins.⁴⁸ Just before their departure, Mr. Jackson, a local jeweler, successfully persuaded Wylie and Lockey to take him along. Wylie negotiated with the eager young man a price of \$1.00 a day to join the excursion, provided that Jackson could procure his own blanket. While guiding tourists through America's Wonderland was an unintentional prospect for him at this time, Wylie, in essence, had just contracted his first commercial trip into Yellowstone.

The trio traveled around the entire park loop, visiting all points of interest. According to Wylie this saddle-horse tour of 1880 "omitted nothing... that has been seen or visited since."⁴⁹ At Jack Baronett's bridge, about eight miles below Tower Fall, Lockey parted company with Wylie and Jackson, and proceeded to Cooke City as he originally planned. Wylie and Jackson then headed west to Mammoth Hot Springs. After about ten miles, the two men began looking for a place to camp and spotted an inviting meadow on the opposite side of a stream known today as Blacktail Deer Creek. To access the site, Wylie, Jackson, and their horses had to jump the creek, which was narrow and deep. The following morning they sought out the narrowest place to jump their horses back across the stream. One horse struck his pack against the tall snag of a dead tree and toppled into the icy-cold stream. Fearing a life in hell and damnation if he lost the minister's property, Wylie snubbed the horse's halter to his saddle and pulled the horse with the

⁴⁸ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 10.

⁴⁹ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 12.

“aid of the swift current down stream to where he could be made to get onto his feet.”⁵⁰

Wylie’s sense of responsibility for the safety of the borrowed horse was typical of most gentlemen in that era.

The nineteenth century middle-class struggle for identity brought about substantial changes in codes of conduct. Values of equality, democracy, self-respect, and moral imperative took precedence over time-honored traditions of deference that had previously differentiated levels of social status. These new codes of behavior were born out of a desire to achieve social mobility, and they intertwined self-interest with self-improvement in the ongoing transition to a decorous middle-class society. This paradigm of conduct as well as middling social identity became tied to courtesy, manners, and etiquette based on values of respectability and proper deportment.⁵¹

Contemporary scholars of social history referred to this new ideal of conduct as “the culture of gentility.” Recent examinations of this evolution of social change by Timothy Mahoney, Dallett Hemphill, Linda Young, and others, revealed that the origins of the rules and practices of these behavior codes are deeply rooted in intellectual, religious, and social principles. Furthermore, these studies demonstrated that gentility codes functioned as a cultural system that stabilized and secured both social position and social order, and thus created a public middle class sphere.⁵²

⁵⁰ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 13.

⁵¹ Jackson, *Domesticating the West*, 23; Timothy Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle-class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), *passim*.

⁵² For examinations of conduct see Timothy Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*; C. Dallett Hemphill, “Manners and Class in the Revolutionary Era: A Transatlantic Comparison,” *William and Mary Quarterly* LXIII, no. 2, (April 2006); Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia, and Britain*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

Wylie's sensibilities were typical of these nineteenth-century middle-class standards of conduct and his moral sensitivity to insuring the safety of the borrowed horse most likely stemmed from these codes of gentility, as well as educational and religious precepts that were embedded in his "old school" Presbyterianism.⁵³ In his efforts to succeed in life Wylie strove to fashion himself according to the tenets of these principles of respectability and gentility. From his earliest days and throughout his life Wylie was ever mindful of these canons of middle-class behavior for himself and his family, and later for the employees of his touring operation.

According to the August 12, 1880, *Bozeman Avant Courier* newspaper, Wylie returned from his "quite... extensive trip to ...Yellowstone National Park" in early August and was "so highly delighted with 'Wonderland' that he determined to return with his family and make a more extended visit." Upon his arrival home, Wylie apparently wasted no time in assembling his group of travelers, as the newspaper article continued: "they accordingly leave this morning by private conveyance prepared to camp out and visit all the principal points of interest in the Park."⁵⁴ Within days of his return, Wylie assembled a party of nine adventurous souls, which included himself, Mrs. Wylie and their three children, Mr. Wright (a visitor to Bozeman from San Francisco), two young men from Bozeman, and a woman friend of Mrs. Wylie. Purchasing a new Bain lumber wagon with an emigrant cover,⁵⁵ a new pair of harnesses, and other items, Wylie

⁵³ Timothy Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 117.

⁵⁴ *Bozeman Avant Courier*, August 12, 1880.

⁵⁵ Bain Wagon Works began operations in Kenosha, Wisconsin in 1852 and became one of the largest wagon-making plants in the country by 1900. With the increase in agricultural production, the wagons and carriages industry boomed. From 1860 to 1870 the value of carriage and wagon production in Wisconsin lagged only behind flour milling and lumber. More information on this topic can be found on the Wisconsin Historical Society website: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/wihistory.asp>.

set off with his merry band of tourists, all excited and elated to be making the journey to the legendary “Geysers.” Little did they know that the journey itself would become legendary.

Upon arriving at Mammoth Hot Springs, Wylie’s group met a Mr. and Mrs. Thompson and daughter traveling in a spring wagon and expressed a desire to accompany them, now making the troupe a party of twelve. Adding this family to the Wylie entourage meant adding two more horses, which turned out to be a favorable arrangement because on more than one occasion they needed to use all four horses to get just one wagon over some sections of Norris’s “good roads.” The party found many tree stumps not cut low enough to permit their wagons to pass without the axle catching. This required them to unhitch the team from the front of the wagon, harness the team to the back, draw the wagon backward off the stump, and cut the stump shorter. In Gibbon Canyon the road had not yet been cleared, making it necessary for them to drive the wagons in the bed of the river. Norris’s “good roads” meant slow travelling, and they spent more than a week traveling from Mammoth Hot Springs to the geyser basins, a trip that today takes an hour and a half. Despite their trials and tribulations, Wylie asserted that the magnificent geyser displays amply rewarded the party for all the hardships they endured. According to his autobiography, Wylie believed that this excursion in the late summer of 1880 made his group the *first commercial tourist party* to travel from Mammoth Hot Springs to the Upper Geyser Basin in a wheeled vehicle (wagon).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Wylie beat Carrie and Robert Strahorn’s wagon trip in October, 1880 by six weeks. Carrie A. Strahorn, *Fifteen Thousand Miles by Stage* (New York: G.T Putnam and Sons, 1911), 254-255.

Lest it be thought that Wylie on his first trip with Lockey and his second trip with *his* first touring party were the only tourists in the park, an article in the Bozeman newspaper signed only as “The Tourist” testified that:

[H.B.] Calfee of Bozeman, and Butler, of Butte are in the Park, photographing all points of interest. Col. [W.D.] Picket, with George Henderson and Asa, is moving along leisurely, killing bear wherever they may be found, and enjoying his summer hunt. Messrs. Rudolph and Sherman, of Spring, Ill., Drs. Stewart and Sharp, of Pennsylvania, Major Hughes and party, Dr. St. John, and several young men from Nebraska ... are in the Park. Also Mr. Sargent, who is finding ample material for his book, soon to be published in London, England. Mr. and Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Kennedy and family, Mr. Hutchinson, and Major [F.D.] Pease are at Mammoth.⁵⁷

While no official visitation counts of that year exist, by 1880 standards, the park that August seemed heavily visited and enjoyed. Perhaps seeing this interest prompted Wylie to seek out Henry Bird Calfee and propose putting together a stereopticon-illustrated lecture tour to promote the wonders of Yellowstone National Park to an American public still unaware of the beauty of this part of the West.

Before the days of television, movies, and internet, lectures often called *lyceums* were a common form of adult education and entertainment. Lyceums, a community-based lecture format, evolved in the early 1800s to promote and provide a foundation for American adult instruction on various topics such as literature and philosophy. After the Civil War, lyceums reappeared and became commercialized. By joining forces in 1865, the one hundred or so existing lyceum associations created the Associated Western Literary Society and by 1868 merged with the American Literary Society. This union founded the first national, commercial booking agency for lyceums. As a result, this

⁵⁷ *Bozeman Avant Courier*, August 19, 1880.

cooperative effort facilitated booking speakers, arranging travel schedules, and enhancing the associations' negotiating powers to obtain favorable fees. By 1900, the nation had twelve lyceum bureaus, and each one was responsible for booking over three thousand programs a year. In addition to providing education, the purpose of post-civil war lyceums was to provide entertainment. Programs included animal acts, singers and dancers, readers, humorists, impersonators, magicians, and play productions. With the westward expansion of the railroad and the increasing popularity of the lyceum lecture tour, Wylie and Calfee both saw an opportunity to transport the visual marvels of Yellowstone to lyceum theaters and opera houses.⁵⁸

Wylie spent the entire summer of 1881 with photographer Henry Bird Calfee, creating spectacular photographs of Yellowstone's most interesting scenic features. The pair devoted most of their time photographing the Upper Geyser Basin. According to Wylie's account they expended thirteen days attempting to get an acceptable exposure of Splendid Geyser, even though at that time the geyser erupted every other day and would often erupt twelve or more times on that day.⁵⁹

Part of Calfee's difficulty in acquiring this and other photographs of Yellowstone was the technology available at the time. All of his, as well as other photographers,' images prior to the late 1880s were taken by the wet plate process, with all the chemicals and glass plates carried on a pack horse to and from Bozeman. This photographic process required a dark room tent where the glass plates could be coated with chemicals, put into the camera and exposed for a length of time, and then returned to the dark room tent. The

⁵⁸ Paul Finkelman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2000), 236-237.

⁵⁹ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 15.

photographer had to be meticulously careful of everything, from sensitizing the glass plates to handling and safe transport back to the studio. In the case of Splendid Geysers, Calfee had to wait until the geyser was in eruption before quickly sensitizing the plate in the dark-room tent, running the coated plate out to the already positioned camera, and hoping that the geyser would continue to play long enough for a compelling exposure.⁶⁰

In the fall of 1881, Calfee and Wylie began their lecture tour. As usual, the photographic technology of the day proved to be a hindrance. They used an oxygen-hydrogen light that made it necessary for them to make their own oxygen and hydrogen at every place they lectured. This required considerable labor and expense. Wylie and Calfee traveled to several states to give their lecture tour, but the audiences proved to be small and led Wylie to aver that the experience “proved more interesting than profitable.” “So little was known about the Yellowstone park anywhere,” Wylie concluded, “that no kind of advertising would awaken an interest in the minds of the public.”⁶¹

In Saint Paul, Minnesota, they tried their final hand. Procuring the finest theater, Calfee and Wylie invited the officers and directors of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which was then expanding its rails westward and toward Yellowstone. The following day, Northern Pacific executives invited both Wylie and Calfee to a meeting. Excited about promoting tourism to the park, the railroad officials at first put forth the idea of sending the two men and their lecture tour to Europe until their attorney, also in attendance, pointed out that it would be two years before the rails actually reached the park. However, he put forth an alternate suggestion that the Northern Pacific would

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 16.

provide Wylie and Calfee with transportation over the lines the railroad currently operated and furnish the two prospective advertisers with a booking agent. Wylie and Calfee agreed. After traveling through all of the important towns in Minnesota and the Dakotas, the two men finished their tour along the Northern Pacific Railroad route where the rail then ended in Miles City, Montana Territory. Unfortunately the tour drew limited audiences, most likely prompting Wylie and Calfee to abandon this promotional effort. In Miles City they found “two enthusiasts who wanted to buy our outfit.”⁶² They sold.

However, Wylie’s other production from the summer of 1881, his guidebook entitled *Yellowstone National Park or the Great American Wonderland*, was successful. Wylie published his book as a “complete hand or guide-book for tourists” in 1882, which meant it was one of the earliest guidebooks to Yellowstone. While Wylie’s guidebook may have appealed to any class of tourist, his targeted audience was those travelers of middle-class means who were interested in viewing the wonders of Yellowstone on their own. Whether mostly on their own, or as Wylie suggested in his section of “Practical Observations” with a guide, packers were essential. One can ascertain a sense of Wylie’s good judgment from his instructions that all travelers in the party should “have clear understandings concerning all the details of the trip before starting out, and thus avoid quarrels, and misunderstandings.” He counseled, “companions for camping-out trips should be selected with the *greatest* of care. As the beginning of this chapter explained, Wylie intended his guidebook to be a simple handbook to guide and aid the tourist in his rambles in Wonderland.⁶³

⁶² Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 16-17.

⁶³ Wylie, *Yellowstone National Park; or The Great American Wonderland*, 3-5.

Recent studies on tourism by historians such as Hal K. Rothman, John Sears, Patricia Limerick, and Robert Campbell suggest that nineteenth-century tourist guidebooks told people what to see and how to react and thus left the traveler with very little agency to experience an original reaction. However, the personal experiences of National Park Historian Lee Whittlesey as well as geographer Judith Myer, author Paul Schullery, and Xanterra Resorts transportation manager Leslie Quinn, all previous tour guides in Yellowstone, refute this perception as they observed many varied and original reactions of visitors on their tours.⁶⁴ While the earlier historians' remarks may have elements of truth to them, they dismiss the capacity of the human intellect to individually process the spiritual experience offered by western landscapes and leisure time.⁶⁵ To be sure, many guidebooks of the West used descriptive language that gave the reader a rapturous sense of the landscape, but the true experience was still in the going, the doing, the seeing, and the experiencing.⁶⁶

Wylie understood this premise and declared in the guidebook's Preface that:

Enthusiastic descriptions of objects and scenery have not been attempted. The author has observed, while witnessing very many people beholding for the first time these great wonders, that they like to form their own opinions and descriptions of what they see; so he has endeavored to be very plain in his explanations, answering only those questions that are most likely to be put to a competent guide.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone*, 45.

⁶⁵ For example, see Paul Schullery, *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006).

⁶⁶ For guidebook criticisms, see generally all of the following: Robert Campbell, *In Darkest Alaska: Travel and Empire Along the Inside Passage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Patricia Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West," in *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Hal K. Rothman *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*; Schullery, *Searching for Yellowstone*; Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone*.

⁶⁷ Wylie, *Yellowstone National Park; or The Great American Wonderland*, 4-5.

Wylie's candid and forthright hope was that he had produced a *real guide-book*, and he also hoped to "hear said of his book that it is *plain, truthful, and practical*."⁶⁸ In light of that premise, Wylie produced his guidebook specifically to contain only educational particulars and consciously left emotional sensations out of his narrative. This conscious and purposeful act, according to Wylie, made his guidebook different from the others. Educating his guests with factual information about the park, but allowing them to formulate their own emotional reactions became a principle that Wylie would later incorporate into his Camping Company operation. Hence, through his guidebook and his camping enterprise, Wylie successfully stimulated the desires of a curious public, but also succeeded in making the Yellowstone experience individual for each traveler.

Partly as a result of positive reactions to his guidebook, Wylie began guiding small groups of mostly school teachers through Yellowstone, probably in 1882. Beginning in 1883, Wylie ran ten-day camping trips twice a month from Bozeman (some eighty miles distant) to the park with tourists riding on horseback or in mountain spring wagons, and the camp provisions traveling behind in four-horse freight wagons.⁶⁹ This moveable camp operation was in vogue for about ten years, during which time the Wylie educational-style touring system gained national recognition with its appeal to the burgeoning American middle class.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4. Emphasis Wylie's.

⁶⁹ A. W. Miles, "A.W. Miles Describes the Wylie Way in his Conference Speech," *Livingston Enterprise*, September 16, 1911.

“The Only Satisfactory Way”

While his camping operation was growing, Wylie continued his service as a school administrator in Bozeman. He held the position of superintendent of public instruction for the territory of Montana from 1885 until 1887. Utilizing his developing travel savvy, Wylie arranged special railroad fares for teachers attending the 1885 Territorial Teachers Association meeting in Butte, and thus made it possible for a greater number of teachers to attend. He also set up teacher institutes in most of the counties and reorganized the distribution of district superintendents to even out work loads commensurate with salaries. In 1887-1888 Professor Wylie assisted the principal of the Bozeman Academy to get the newly-established school opened and operational. On June 23, 1888, the *Helena Daily Herald* heralded the enrollment of eighty-four pupils as a successful reflection of the school’s first year of operation. Although Wylie enjoyed his academic winters in Bozeman, Yellowstone would eventually evolve as his preferred classroom and instructional haven.

One of the first known newspaper advertisements for Wylie’s camping operation appeared in the *Helena Daily Independent* in 1889. A public notice for the Wylie & Wilson Camping Company⁷⁰ appeared on consecutive Saturdays beginning on May 25, 1889 through June 29, 1889 and offered potential park visitors a detailed description of the operation:

Camping Out in the Yellowstone National Park. Wylie and Wilson take

⁷⁰ The Wilson in this advertisement is presumed to be Mrs. Mary (Wilson) Wylie’s brother, Sam Wilson, who probably moved to Montana in the mid-1880s. The elder Wilson family moved to Montana in 1894 and had a ranch/farm near Wylie. It would seem logical that Wylie would incorporate family into the operation rather than an outside business partner.

tourists through the Park in carriages and on horseback. We furnish tents, provisions, Cooks and everything but bedding. Visit all points of interest and give plenty of time spending 12 days in the Park. Have comfortable carriages, gentle horses, and excellent saddles for both ladies and gentlemen. This is the only satisfactory way to visit the Park. Write the undersigned for particulars and dates of trips. Wylie's illustrated guide and description book mailed for 50 cents. W. W. Wylie, Bozeman, Montana.⁷¹

For middle-class travelers Wylie's "satisfactory way to visit the Park" provided not only economic value, but also encompassed personal and social ideals of late nineteenth-century travel and leisure.

Personal travel motivations of many people, regardless of social status, generally incorporated curiosity and the desire to seek out the unfamiliar. This notion of wanting to learn about exotic places and foreign cultures essentially had its beginnings in the seventeenth century. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke advocated that knowledge, understanding, and ideas are acquired from experiences and personal encounters that involve the senses or that generate reflection on prior knowledge.⁷² Surely then, many people with resources and time reasoned that traveling to unknown places would expand one's base of knowledge and a variety of experiences would lead to the development of the mind, and self improvement. Even so the journey itself proved to be as much a learning experience as the destinations for many early travelers. Travel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries required extensive planning and great investments of time, and often presented risks to life and health.⁷³ However, by

⁷¹ *Helena Daily Herald*, May 25, 1889, 8.

⁷² John Locke, *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed., James L. Axell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

⁷³ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1961), 85.

the nineteenth century advances in transportation systems had decreased the rigors of touring, and consequently changed the experience for many travelers.

In his essay “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel” (1961), historian Daniel Boorstin asserts that around the middle of the nineteenth century, the traveler shifted from being an active participant to being a spectator. He characterizes this trend as the “decline of the traveler and the rise of the tourist.”⁷⁴ To defend this claim, Boorstin presents an interpretation of the etymology of the words *traveler* and *tourist*. *Traveler* is derived from “travail”—an activity that was labor intensive or that required work to achieve the experience, while *tourist* is defined as one who engages in a pleasure trip and expects comfort and safety as well as excitement without much work on his part. As such, Boorstin’s contention suggests that while the *traveler* actively sought out his experience, the *tourist* expected things to happen to him. While this determination may have been applicable to the more well-to-do and is certainly more indicative of the majority of present day tourists, testimonials of late nineteenth and early twentieth century middle-class travelers to Yellowstone with the Wylie Camping Company have revealed that they desired more from their travel excursions.

Thus the Yellowstone travel experience offered by Wylie’s “satisfactory way” created a commodity that the tourist could consume without discomfort, labor, or risk, but with the added benefit of a rewarding, learning experience. Wylie’s advertisements for his carefree educational as well as leisure adventure-tours to Yellowstone National Park reached far and wide. With his reputation as an educator, his guidebook, and the growing popularity of his movable camping operation, Wylie succeeded in attracting visitors from

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

all parts of the country. In July 1891 the *Logansport [Indiana] Reporter* printed a two-part article derived from two “clever letters” from two “well educated and well traveled school teachers,” Ella Luckens and Nirma Palmer both of Lyons, Iowa, who camped with Professor Wylie that summer.⁷⁵ Beginning their trip as nearly all tours to the park began, the school teachers boarded the train in Livingston bound for Cinnabar. Professor Wylie met them in Cinnabar with his outfit of two three-seated carriages, five ponies, two baggage wagons, and two cooks. The entire party consisted of twenty-three individuals, which in all probability included staff and guests. As with many Yellowstone accounts, the first part of the article regaled readers with the amazing natural features of the park, but also offered a glimpse into some of the salient characteristics of a Wylie camping tour.

The party spent three nights at the Lake where one of the features of Wylie’s trips was the gathering around the nightly campfire to share the day’s experiences. As the quintessential educator, Professor Wylie advanced understanding of the park’s nature, history, and geology by lecturing and answering to questions that abounded throughout the evening. The end of the day concluded with the joyful singing of songs. These campfire talks eventually developed as a model of one of the features of today’s national park interpretative ideology.⁷⁶

Interpretation was one of the most enduring and inspirational features of a Wylie tour. While at the Upper Geyser Basin, the school teachers recalled that “the scientific

⁷⁵ *Logansport Reporter*, July 25, 1891, 4.

⁷⁶ Denise S. Vick, “Yellowstone National Park and the Education of Adults” (PhD diss., University of Wyoming, 1986), 52-53; Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone*, 218

explanation of the causes of geysers was listened to with delight.”⁷⁷ For these visitors to Yellowstone, it truly seemed the only satisfactory way to see the park. They declared “without a single exception we enjoyed the twelve days in the Park, [and] whenever we go again [we] will take the ‘camping out.’”⁷⁸ Favorable newspaper accounts such as this as well as letters of appreciation from satisfied guests commenced a system of visitor testimonials that Wylie came to rely on as his business grew.⁷⁹

By 1893, Wylie realized that the popularity of his educational-style tours along with the popularity of Yellowstone had caused his movable camp operation to outgrow its feasibility. For this reason he shifted his entrepreneurial focus toward establishing permanent camps throughout the park. The business, like Topsy, just “grewed,” explained Wylie.⁸⁰ Wylie revealed the serendipity of his new occupation when he recalled in 1926, that it was “at least ten years after this work began, before Mrs. Wylie and I realized that we were drifting into a tourist business.”⁸¹

And drift they did. From 1883 until 1893, Wylie established and refined his educational-style touring system. Wylie’s devotion to offering comfortable and affordable tours of the park resulted in a decision to expand his operation and apply for a

⁷⁷ *Logansport Reporter*, July 27, 1891, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ To date, no archival records of these letters has been located. All references to letters used in this thesis were published in Wylie’s and Miles’s brochures.

⁸⁰ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 19; Topsy was a young “pickaninny” (black child stereotype) slave girl character in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin or Life Among the Lowly* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1852) who when asked, “Do you know who made you?,” claimed to have “just grewed.” Published in 1852, this novel portraying the horrors of slavery became the second best selling book of the nineteenth-century behind the Bible. Shortly after the publication of this book, the phrase “it grewed like Topsy” became a popular expression to describe unplanned and sometime massive growth of something.

⁸¹ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 19.

ten-year lease as well as permanent camping spots throughout the park. This quest, which would ensure a democratized system of travel and touring in Yellowstone, led William Wallace Wylie on a twelve-year pursuit that challenged the conceived boundaries of the moneyed and politically connected hotel syndicate.

CHAPTER 3

RESPECTABLE RECREATION: CREATING CAMPS OF CHARACTER

Work, discipline, and industry were highly respected virtues of a blossoming late nineteenth-century American middle-class, while leisure was viewed with suspicion. In order to honor their well-ordered work ethic and validate leisure time, middle-class men and women began to fashion vacations that included education and personal enrichment. At the same time that the middle class became participants in a burgeoning consumer culture of material goods, they also became participants in the acquisition of education, knowledge, and experience. Intellectual self-improvement through travel became an acceptable and sought after method of spending leisure time.

Over all, leisure for the middle class had to be respectable, productive, and rational. In her book *Working at Play*, Cindy Aron asserted that the emerging nineteenth-century American middle class did not easily embrace the concept of leisure time. The Puritan work ethic had warned that the dangers of idleness were the work of the devil. Self-improvement vacations allowed evolving middle-class culture to re-envision the roles of work and leisure by engendering a feeling of productivity while at play. Thus, leisure ideally would be educational and constructive as well as providing healthy, restorative bodily redemption from one's industrial endeavors.⁸²

William W. Wylie, a product and participant of this middle-class work ethic, designed his Wylie camping system with the aim of combining work ideals and playful

⁸² Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-11.

thrills. As a school teacher, Wylie understood the interplay between knowledge and self-improvement, and Yellowstone became his outdoor university for instruction. Hiring college students and teachers as guides and interpreters, Wylie provided his guests with a deeper understanding of the geology and geography as well as the flora and fauna of Yellowstone. The Wylie method of touring satisfied middle-class values and forestalled possible guilt by providing educational and meaningful as well as playful vacation-and-leisure activities. Wylie may have been the first to bring education, nature, geography, and geology commercially together through his guided tours of Yellowstone. For Wylie, his “personally conducted” educational tours through the park became a way of life: a mission driven by both a sense of purposefulness and fulfillment as well a commercial success.

A High Calling

While originally a religious based doctrine, the concept of one’s life calling had changed meaning by the end of the nineteenth century. Rather than guaranteeing divine salvation, the tenets of a secularized life calling or vocation advocated personal fulfillment. This new vocational ideology still held firmly the moral value of work, but was tempered by the perspective of rationalization.⁸³ For many middle-class entrepreneurs, such as William Wallace Wylie, this meant that it was possible to create a calling out of a personal conception and develop an identity within it. William Wallace

⁸³ Jurgen Habermas, “Modernity’s Consciousness of Time,” in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1990), p.2.

Wylie envisioned a system of touring Yellowstone that would serve the “greatest good for the greatest number.”⁸⁴ His was a high calling.

In the spring of 1893 Wylie traveled from Montana to Washington D.C. to apply for permission from the Secretary of Interior to establish fixed camp sites and lunch stations. He employed Washington attorney George H. Lamar to act in his behalf. According to a legal brief prepared by attorneys James A. Blanchard of New York and George H. Lamar of Washington DC, Wylie was granted permission to establish his permanent camps in 1893, but not without stipulations. The report recommended that Wylie be granted a license to conduct parties through the Park,

...and while we are in doubt as to the wisdom of establishing permanent camps....we deem it advisable for the *sake of accommodating the large class of persons who desire to camp* that he be for this year alone granted a permit for permanent camps at the points he has indicated in his application, such sites however, to be selected by the Superintendent of the Park, and to be absolutely under his control and inspection, and the permit to be revocable whenever it becomes apparent that such camps are a disadvantage to the traveling public. *This recommendation is made with a view of trying the experiment of permanent camps.*⁸⁵

Not surprisingly, Wylie found this agreement unacceptable, as the expenditures required for setting up permanent camps would not be justified by so short a time frame nor as a mere *experiment*. However, he did take advantage of the limited approval and asked to secure his site selections, which consisted of nine one-acre plots of ground at various

⁸⁴ This phrase is most commonly attributed to Philosopher, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832); an adaptation of his “greatest happiness” quote in his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* first published in 1789. This principle is a fundamental element of utilitarianism.

⁸⁵ Blanchard and Lamar, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Brief in Support of Application*, 9.

points of interest around the park. He hoped that his application for a “term of years” would be reconsidered in the near future.

However, when Wylie attempted to have his plots assigned, he ran into the vehement opposition of park superintendent, Captain George S. Anderson. Anderson not only opposed Wylie’s idea for permanent camps, he openly questioned the Department of Interior’s judgment in allowing the camps to be set up, even on an experimental basis. In a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, Anderson criticized the Department’s decision asserting that in his opinion, “the establishment of permanent camps has not been deemed essential, or even advisable, as it would soon degenerate into the erection of a lot of fourth-class hotels, unsightly and difficult to supervise.” Judiciously he added, “[s]hould it still be deemed proper to grant Mr. Wylie’s request, the sites can be designated without delay.”⁸⁶ Perhaps Captain Anderson acquiesced to some extent, believing that an element of deference was due his superiors. Nonetheless, he reaffirmed his objections in his 1893 *Report of the Superintendent* when he stated that “a permanent camp is only a step removed from a shanty or ‘shack,’ and it would be a desecration of the Park to allow such to spring up.”⁸⁷

While Anderson’s opinion may have seemed heavy handed, he had good reason to worry about protecting Yellowstone from commercialized development. By the 1890s, the despoliation of one of America’s most iconic natural attractions, Niagara Falls, had

⁸⁶ George H. Lamar and James A. Blanchard, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Reply to Protest of Captain Anderson and Discussion of Park Combinations*, Filed February 7, 1898 (Washington, D.C.:J.S. Tomlinson & Son, Printers, 1898), 13.

⁸⁷ Captain George S. Anderson, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of Interior 1893* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), 9-10.

captured the attention of nearly everyone. A tourist attraction since the 1820s, Niagara had developed into a dizzying world of trinket shops, photographers' studios, hawking tour guides, and boat tours. Promoters of New York's premier tourist spot believed that it was not enough to just see the Falls; one must "do the Falls." Erecting ladders and stone stairways to the bottom of the American Falls and a wooden walkway to the brink of Horseshoe Falls, these marketers provided some tourists with a heightened sense of the falls, but for others those developments obscured the scenic panorama of the natural landscape. Author Henry James visited Niagara in 1871, a year before the establishment of Yellowstone, and was appalled at the number of "horribly vulgar shops and booths and catchpenny artifices which have pushed and elbowed to within the very spray of the Falls."⁸⁸ Charged with protecting the natural wonders of Yellowstone, Anderson apparently took the lessons of Niagara to heart and vigorously opposed volumes of petitions for commercial development in Yellowstone, including an application to build an elevator to the bottom of the Lower Falls. While his resistance to the establishment of permanent camps was by no means an exceptional occurrence of Anderson's dealings with concessioners, it nonetheless presented a problem for Wylie. It became apparent to Wylie that his crusade for the establishment of his permanent camps would have to be fought on two fronts: one in Washington and the other in Yellowstone.⁸⁹

Wylie applied for an extended lease for the next three years only to have his application repeatedly denied. In the spring of 1896, Wylie made a personal appearance before Assistant Secretary of Interior, William H. Sims, to explain his request:

⁸⁸ Henry James quoted in Sears, *Sacred Places*, 30.

⁸⁹ Sears, *Sacred Places*, 12-30.

If granted a lease for a term of years, I would erect long tents fitted with sleeping compartments to accommodate about eighty persons. This would need to be done at each of the four different points asked for in the application lease. I think that it will be readily seen that the expenditure necessary to comfortably fit and equip these permanent camps will require an outlay that a single year tenure will not warrant. Then you must appreciate the hindrance there is in the fact that I am not able to assure my patrons one year that I will be in business the next.⁹⁰

Notwithstanding Wylie's personal appeal, Secretary Sims once again denied his application for a lease of ten years and issued him the customary one-year license for a camping privilege. However, the Secretary also stipulated that Wylie's license for 1896 season had been issued "with the understanding that upon expiration thereof that it would be renewed, provided all its conditions are faithfully observed by you."⁹¹ With this assurance of a renewal, Wylie was able to obtain the necessary funds and set up four permanent camps at Willow Park, Upper Geyser Basin, Lake, and Canyon with comfortable tents, beds, bedding, carpets, and wood-stoves, along with two lunch stations, one near Gibbon Falls and the other at the Thumb of the Lake for the 1896 season.

Eva Moger and her family independently traveled through the park for fifteen days in August, 1896; her party stayed for an evening near the Wylie camp at Apollinaris Spring. She remarked that "it is a lovely place [with] plenty of feed for the horses." Wylie had a "nice camp of ten tents and [they] are fixed up nicely."⁹² They also found the Upper Geyser Basin Camp to be equally pleasant. "We are camping here on Mr. Wylie's ground

⁹⁰ Blanchard and Lamar, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Brief in Support of Application*, 10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Eva Moger, "Park Trip 1896," unpublished diary, Yellowstone National Park Library, [3].

[at Upper Geyser Basin], back of the Splendid, [and] it is a very good place,” she commented. “They have a nice camp here with 3 blue tents besides [*sic*] others.”⁹³ Traveling independently with their own wagons and horses, Eva and her family represented a class of traveler known as sagebrushers. Since they were not actually traveling with the Wylie Camping Company, her positive observations in 1896 represented a rare and impartial reflection of the Wylie operation from an outsider’s point of view.

However, Captain Anderson did not see the camps in the same light as Eva Moger. In his 1896 *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of Interior*, Anderson acknowledged the Department’s approval of the Wylie Camps, but maintained his disapproval of that decision.

A license has been granted to Mr. W.W. Wylie, of Bozeman, Mont., to conduct parties through the park and to establish four permanent camps. He has placed signs at the roadside directing travelers to his tents, and he has erected some wooden buildings or temporary structures at his camps. The great objection to this form of business is the establishment of unsightly, vermin-breeding shanties near the roadside.⁹⁴

The wooden structures to which he objected were actually neat privies that were in almost every instance entirely out of sight of the road, and they were also considered by many visitors to be superior in appearance to similar structures constructed by the government.⁹⁵

⁹³ Moger, “Park Trip 1896,” [5].

⁹⁴ Captain George S. Anderson, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of Interior 1896* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), 4.

⁹⁵ Blanchard and Lamar, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Brief in Support of Application*, 14; Lamar and Blanchard, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with*

According to Wylie’s attorneys, Blanchard and Lamar, the success of his first season proved several things. First it “proved that one season alone would not justify the necessary expenditures.”⁹⁶ Second and more important, the successes of the season “demonstrated beyond question that the kind of accommodations furnished was in harmony with the financial ability, tastes, and expectations of a great many of our best citizens, and but for such accommodations many of them would not or could not visit the Park.”⁹⁷ In addition to the satisfaction of patrons, the accommodations provided by Wylie “were such as were promised to the Department and accorded with the spirit of the requirements.”⁹⁸ Largely, the mettle of the Wylie Permanent Camps went beyond the government requirements, which proved influential in the realization of Wylie’s hopes for his nascent undertaking. The key to the success of his maverick camping venture was in the deeply entrenched middle-class values that combined a conscientious work ethic with a constructive leisure ethic as well as in the affordability of the Wylie tours. Fulfilling all of these ideals became the hallmark of the Wylie Camping Company.

Camps of Character

The precise meaning of Max Weber’s “Protestant Work Ethic” stands as one of the most controversial topics in scholarly circles. Many critics view his theories on the motivations and significance of one’s work as a critique primarily based on religious precepts. However, if viewed as a social analysis of middle-class activities and

the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Reply to Protest of Captain Anderson and Discussion of Park Combinations, 34.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

behaviors, some of Weber's standpoints referred more to attitudes and codes of conduct toward work rather than merely to religious inculcation. A few of these prominent attitudes included: a formidable sense of duty to one's work; a conviction that work contributes to the moral worth of an individual as well as to the health of the social order; and an opinion that leisure is earned by hard work.⁹⁹

Yet a conscientious late nineteenth-century work ethic required more than hard work. It required a corresponding array of values that included honesty, integrity, diligence, piety, industry, orderliness, sincerity, temperance, and thrift. Those values became the lifeblood of the Wylie Camping Company, and developed a standard of service that proved noteworthy for multitudes of middle-class travelers. One of Wylie's guests, Theodore Goldin, described his satisfaction with the camping and touring operation.

Mr. Wylie has spent a great many years and a considerable amount of money in perfecting his very excellent system and in working up a business which, whether it has been profitable to him or not have proved of great comfort, convenience, and pleasure to thousands of tourists. During the season of 1900, with a party of friends of over a dozen, I made the tour of the Park under the charge of the Wylie Co. and I can frankly say that in a traveling and camping experience of over twenty-five years, I never found myself better cared for, and never received more courteous treatment.¹⁰⁰

The principled caliber of the employees who worked in unison with the Wylie family imbued the Wylie tours with a certain character. At their core, these traits of virtue, value, and character had everything to do with the success of the Wylie tours. Robert Dellet, a

⁹⁹ Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens, *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁰ Goldin quoted in W.W Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps* (Helena: State Publishing Co., [1904]), 13.

Wylie camp guest in 1901, was quite taken with the character of the large Wylie family, and he wrote glowingly about them:

The family consists of father, mother, two daughters, and three sons. Mr. Wylie is a man of probably fifty and a pioneer in the business, having been at it for many years; Mrs. Wylie is about the same age, a large, motherly woman who just can't help being pleasant and obliging, overseeing the affairs of all the camps and looking after the comfort of all her patrons, as well as helping the girls whom they employ to understand what is expected of them.¹⁰¹

Unusual for the time, Dellet provided an egalitarian feminist stance to his observations of the Wylie children as he viewed the girls as well as the boys to be of equal aptitude:

The daughters are two exceedingly intelligent girls, one about twenty-two, and the other, probably nineteen. The elder is a graduate of Wellesley College in Massachusetts and the younger one will graduate from the same institution next year. The boys are equally intelligent and interesting, yet they drive, one of them at least drives one of the coaches, while the older one drives a freighter, that is, a big four house team, hauling supplies from Cinnabar to the various camps, the younger boy staying in one of the camps as a helper.¹⁰²

Dellett was equally impressed with the moral fiber of the Wylie staff as he marveled at the quality of people in the employ of the Wylie operation:

These camps are presided over by the most courteous and charming people I ever met; the matron, which is a feature of every camp, is invariably an elderly lady who is not only a personal friend of the Wylie's, but is employed by them for the very fact of her ability as a manager and an entertainer, as well as for her intelligence and moral worth.¹⁰³

Dellett recognized that this was not an ordinary employment enterprise. Beyond pioneering an economical and educational tour of Yellowstone, Wylie had, within his

¹⁰¹ Robert A. Dellett, unpublished manuscript, MSS 110, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, [2].

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

own limited system, redefined nineteenth-century labor relations by making his employees feel valued.

They [the Wylies] are a charming family, and to prove that their help is way above the average servant in social standing as well as ability, one has only to see how cordially they are treated by the family.¹⁰⁴

He was also quick to realize that the courtesy shown to the employees extended to Wylie's guests as well:

We are shown into the dining tent and sit down to a table elegantly prepared and bountifully spread with the very best the markets afford. Attentive waiters (girls) wait on the table, and at this camp, Mrs. Wylie, herself, seemed to be everywhere, attending to and looking after the comfort of each guest; the fact of the matter is, we were treated like very dear friends on a visit, than paid up patrons.¹⁰⁵

These highly valued traits of camaraderie, courtesy, and character were qualities that stemmed from education. Nineteenth century middle-class Americans believed wholeheartedly in formal education as well as self-improvement for a more enriched life. They trusted in the capacity of education to mold personal character, and held confidently to the belief that hard work, resolve, diligence, and continued education could enable an individual to rise in status and prosperity.

An educated staff was a feature that made the Wylie Camping Company especially attractive to the middle class. Wylie guest Dorothy Pardo took note of the “fact that the attendants are all people of refinement—many of the men being college fellows, and the girls being school teachers who are taking this way of spending a profitable and

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

pleasurable [summer] vacation.”¹⁰⁶ Another Wylie guest, Elizabeth Cannon, was especially taken by the democratic management and the diversity of the Wylie Permanent Camping Company workforce:

The employees at the Wylie camps are Eastern college men and school ma'ams [*sic*] who grasp this opportunity to earn their vacation and see the park. How popular the positions are is attested by the fact that they have two thousand applications ahead on the list, Lady Mack, the grand matron, is a keen reader of human nature, and rarely makes a mistake in picking her help. No caste is recognized but the ability to work. Two millionaires' sons fraternize with the bronco busters. “Brilliant,” one of the drivers is a lawyer; “Cash Register,” is an undergraduate osteopath, and “Soaper,” is an art student at the University of Montana. The matron of the lake is the principal of a Pennsylvania school, one cook is a stenographer, and another is a nurse.¹⁰⁷

This type of educated and personable workforce became and remained the underpinning of the Wylie Camping Company's success. Nine months out of the year Wylie employees majored in fine art, marketing, business, and law, but for the summer they majored in providing respectable recreation.

Enhancing Experiences

William Wallace Wylie was a visionary of early park interpretation. He put into practice a “special type of translation, of historic, cultural, and natural phenomena” so that people could better understand and appreciate their worth.¹⁰⁸ In a certain sense, Yellowstone became the educator with the well-informed Wylie guides providing the

¹⁰⁶ Dorothy Pardo, “Dorothy-In-Wonderland,” unpublished manuscript, Yellowstone National Park Library, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Cannon, “Where the Savages Wait on the Dudes,” *Western Monthly* 12, no. 5 (May 1911): 38.

¹⁰⁸ Douglas M. Knudson, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College: Venture Publishing, 2003), xi.

needed interpretation. He entrusted his guides with the job of transforming basic facts into narratives that stimulated understanding, knowledge, and inspiration. While the formal convention of national park interpretation was still decades away, Wylie's professional system of providing educated guides for his guests infused intellectual connections with the natural environment of Yellowstone for thousands of late nineteenth-century middle-class travelers. By merging intellectual content with physical and emotional experiences, Wylie guides revealed the meaning of the park's nature, geology, and geography in their fascinating presentations. Through this guided interpretation, Wylie guests gained new means of perceiving the park's geological marvels, and were elevated from "passive appreciation to exciting understanding" of Yellowstone's natural environment.¹⁰⁹ As their experiences became enhanced, so did the value of their leisure time. For many middle-class travelers, the Wylie interpretive tours imparted a feeling that they had made intelligent use of leisure time as well as a sense of recreational enjoyment.

To their guests, Wylie guides were considered to be experts on the nature of Yellowstone and they delivered. With as much accuracy as current knowledge allowed, they unveiled scientific details of Yellowstone's geysers, hot springs, fumaroles, and mud pots in intriguing lectures and tangible experiences.

Shortly after breakfast on the morning of July 13th, our party started out with the guide—a young medical student from the University of Minnesota. He was a tall, muscular fellow, possessed of a deep, resonant voice, an active imagination and a fund of humor and good nature. In our morning's ramble we visited the principle geysers and pools of the Upper

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Basin, lying between our camp and the Old Faithful Inn. Our guide told us all that he knew...about the geysers geologically and traditionally.¹¹⁰

Revealing the working processes of geysers, hot springs, flowers, and trees, Wylie guides brought the park's nature and landscape to life and gave visitors more meaningful experience with what otherwise might have just been boiling water or pretty flora. In other words through interpretation, visitors were able to see beyond the obvious or ordinary, and broaden their thinking.

Overall the best interpretation for many Yellowstone tourists was not only enjoyable but also evoked an "uplifting emotional response."¹¹¹ Naturalist, John Burroughs, wrote in 1916 that "to absorb a thing is better than to learn it. I am not merely contented, like Wordsworth's poetry, to enjoy what others understand. I must understand also; but above all things, I must enjoy."¹¹² For Wylie visitors to Yellowstone, recreation and education went hand-in-hand as the interpretive guides provided inspirational and imaginative insight. A tour through one of the smaller geyser basins near Old Faithful encouraged one woman traveler to imaginatively remark that "[w]e walked on formations that resembled raised biscuits and give this region a name, it being called Biscuit Basin. If these were biscuits, they must have been the efforts of a Mrs. Newlywed!"¹¹³ Blending pleasure, inspiration, and information, Wylie guides helped people to interpret the landscape for themselves, not to just look and listen.

¹¹⁰ Pardo, "Dorothy-In-Wonderland," 24.

¹¹¹ Knudson, Cable, and Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, 51.

¹¹² John Burroughs, "The Gospel of Nature," *The Complete Writings of John Burroughs* (Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2001), 249, 251.

¹¹³ Pardo, "Dorothy-In-Wonderland," 28.

A Landscape of Economy and Democracy

The proliferation of books on western travel undoubtedly advanced the growth of recreational tourism to Yellowstone. Yellowstone offered travelers the known and unknown, the memorable and unusual, and the discovery of one's patriotic connection to the nation's first national park. Initially a vacation destination for the wealthy with the arrival of the railroad in 1883, Yellowstone became a place that was recognized by many Americans and Europeans as a leisure-tourism status symbol. Wylie's camping operation offered an avenue for upwardly-striving middle-class Americans to experience Yellowstone National Park. A six and one-half day tour with the Wylie Permanent Camps offered visitors great value at a cost of thirty-five dollars, which included the boat ride across to Lake Camp as opposed to the five day hotel tour that cost fifty dollars plus an extra fee for the boat. Wylie made no pretense to elaborate service or elegant furnishings in his camp life in Yellowstone but rather offered "low prices as a great convenience to thousands of people who hardly feel able to bear the expense of such a trip."¹¹⁴

Mr. Woodward Allen from Omaha, Nebraska wrote that "[a]s leader and organizer of a party of twenty-seven I visited the Park last summer under the auspices of the Wylie Co., and it was the unanimous verdict that ...the Wylie plan was far preferable. Besides the added pleasure given us, it was quite evident that the trip could not have been made nearly so economically in any other way. As a large portion of our party were school

¹¹⁴ Root quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1904], 17.

teachers and persons of moderate means, this matter was of importance.”¹¹⁵ Mr. Allen was so satisfied with his tour that he came back again in 1902 with another large party.

Thrift was an important concept for late nineteenth-early twentieth century middle-class Americans and the ability to travel economically as well as comfortably to Yellowstone was particularly appreciated. For many travelers to Yellowstone, the Wylie Camping Company offered an ideal system, moderate in expense and richly enjoyable. They returned home to entice friends, relative, neighbors, and even sometimes strangers to experience Yellowstone in the hands of Professor Wylie. Offering comfortable beds, cheerful hospitality, wholesome food, educated guides, and splendidly furnished tents, the Wylie Permanent Camping Company quickly became a recognized way to tour the park economically and enjoyably.

Tragedy and Triumph of the Commons

Although Wylie’s accommodations had gained the approval of the Department of Interior at the end of 1896 season, Superintendent Captain George Anderson continued his disapproval of the camps. In June 1897, Captain Anderson was replaced by Colonel S.B.M. Young. Anderson left Young with a detailed report of the park’s administrative duties as well as ongoing concerns and projects, including his opinion of the Wylie Camping Company. Anderson’s adverse report undoubtedly prejudiced Colonel Young’s attitude toward the camping company and influenced Young’s negative response to Wylie’s request for a lease for a term of years. In addition, it may have been Anderson’s

¹¹⁵Allen quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1904], 13.

unfavorable commentary that prompted Young to recommend to the Department of Interior that the Transportation Company and the Park Association (the hotel company) should meet the demand for those who preferred to live in camps rather than grant Wylie his application. In essence, Young proposed the expulsion of the Wylie Camping Company.¹¹⁶

Wylie persisted in his quest for a long term lease and began an all out crusade to validate the *raison d'être* for his camping company, which he believed was vital to uphold the purpose of Congress in dedicating Yellowstone as a pleasure ground— for *all* the people.

It was a noble act, not on account of the transcendent importance of the territory it was designed to protect, but because it was a marked innovation in the traditional policy of governments. From time immemorial privileged classes have been protected by law in the withdrawal, for their exclusive enjoyment, of immense tracts for forests, parks, of game preserves. But never before was a region of such vast extent as the Yellowstone Park set apart for the use of all the people without distinction of rank or wealth.¹¹⁷

Army Corp of Engineers, Major Hiram Chittenden must have penned these altruistic words in his 1895 *Yellowstone National Park* with democracy in mind. However, advancing these lofty ideals proved to be yet another matter for the Wylie Camping Company. What W.W. Wylie encountered in trying to provide enjoyment and enable the

¹¹⁶ James A. Blanchard and George H. Lamar, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Amended Application and Reply to Report of Acting Superintendent*, Filed December 11, 1897 (Washington, D.C.:J.S. Tomlinson & Son, Printers, 1897), 18-20.

¹¹⁷ Chittenden, *Yellowstone National Park*, 96.

use of the park for all the people without distinction of rank or wealth was more akin to a “tragedy of the commons.”¹¹⁸

Coined by scientist Garrett Hardin in an influential 1968 article entitled “Tragedy of the Commons,” the phrase outlines the repercussions to a shared resource when individuals or splinter groups act in their own self interest and disregard what is best for the whole group.¹¹⁹ Ultimately this results in uncertainty for the future by dissipating the social identity of a larger community with the common reserve. While this concept is most frequently used to describe environmental issues of overuse, it also speaks to the fair use of a shared landscape such as Yellowstone. Applied to the dilemma facing the Wylie Camping Company, this interpretation of “tragedy of the commons” had the capability to invoke a profound and adverse effect on the trust that middle-class citizens had placed in the government to protect the country’s first national commons. While the government was in charge of policing Yellowstone, the park’s administration was not necessarily charged with “ensuring fair use of this shared resource.”¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the trust of the American populace, for whom the park was set aside, could only be retained by “employing fair decision making rules and procedures.”¹²¹ A great many Americans believed in the Wylie Camping Company and petitioned on Wylie’s behalf.

Wylie took several steps to bolster his bargaining power with the Department of Interior at the end of 1896. First, he incorporated his business in November, and then he took his cause directly to those who would be most affected by his exclusion from the

¹¹⁸ Garrett Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162, no. 3859 (December 1968): 1243.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ M. Van Vugt, “Averting the tragedy of the commons: Using social psychological science to protect the environment,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 18, no. 3 (June 2009): 170.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 171.

park—the people. The public outcry made news from coast to coast. In June 1897, the *New York Tribune* as well as the *Chicago Tribune* published a long column entitled, “Camps in Yellowstone Park: Project to Establish Permanent Outdoor Homes for Tourists in the Western Wonderland.” It described in detail Wylie’s conflict with Secretary of Interior, Cornelius N. Bliss, the Northern Pacific Railroad (that now owned the hotels), and park superintendents.¹²² The *Salt Lake Herald* ran the same article, except with a title appealing to a democratic sentiment—“Yellowstone Park: Attempts to Make it Accessible to the People.” While the newspaper reports attempted to appear fair-minded, the message they conveyed to middle-class Americans worked as an unsolicited appeal for additional support for Wylie.

Many professors and students in universities and colleges and scientific men who have traveled in the Yellowstone National Park have expressed their interest in an application recently made by Professor William W. Wylie of Bozeman, Mont., to the Secretary of Interior for a lease for camping grounds in the Park for ten years. Every season since 1880 Professor Wylie has been conducting camping parties through the Yellowstone Park, and by lectures and literary contributions, has been making known to the people of this country the wonders of the park and its opportunities for scientific investigation. He has been supported warmly in his attempt to get the right to establish permanent camps in the park in order that more teachers, students, artists, ministers, and scientists may spend summer vacations there at a reasonable cost and without danger.¹²³

This entreaty apparently caught the attention of hundreds of teachers, students, artists, doctors, ministers, lawyers, dentists, school superintendents and principals, judges, piano

¹²² This article originally appeared in the *New York Tribune* on June 19, 1897 and the *Chicago Tribune* on June 27, 1897; Captain Anderson was Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone Park from February 15, 1891 until June 23, 1897. Colonel S.B.M. Young was Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone Park from June 23, 1897 until November 15, 1897. The term *Acting Superintendent* was utilized as the army’s administration of the park was always considered temporary, even though the army ended up being in control for over thirty years.

¹²³ “Camps in the Yellowstone Park,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1897, 12.

dealers, druggists, and even senators, who not only traveled with Wylie in the summer of 1897, but also wrote letters to Secretary Bliss in support of Wylie's application. Some people wrote letters to praise the Wylie Camping Company on its commendable service, while others wrote from a clearly democratic perspective. In a three-page letter to Secretary Bliss dated January 27, 1898, Dr. Shelton Davis voiced his opinion as an American citizen and explained in great detail his support of the Wylie permanent camps based on his personal experience with the Wylie Camping Company, the Northern Pacific Railroad, and the hotel company.

Having toured the Yellowstone National Park last summer [1897] and received accommodations at the hands of Prof. Wm. w. Wylie in his Permanent Tent Camps there, and learning that the question of a continuance of his business under a lease instead of a license is now under consideration by the proper governmental authorities, I feel that justice and fair play to this American citizen, as well as those who prefer, as I do, the character of the facilities provided by him there, demand that my own experience with the powerful opposition should be known.¹²⁴

Upon their arrival in Yellowstone, Shelton and his companions attempted to secure sleeping berths on the railroad for their return trip with the agent at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel. As they stood in line awaiting their turn to put in a request, they were shocked at the rudeness that the hotel clerk used toward a woman who was traveling with the Wylie Company. When Shelton and his companions approached the desk, the surly clerk abruptly closed his reservation book and sniffed, "he had no time to fool with [them] and walked away."¹²⁵ That was only the beginning of Shelton's disdain for the

¹²⁴ Shelton quoted in Lamar and Blanchard, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Reply to Protest of Captain Anderson and Discussion of Park Combinations*, 29.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

arrogance of the hotel and railroad employees. Shelton and his companions were genuinely pleased with the obvious difference of attitude that they experienced with the Wylie employees.

While in the park, myself and companions were made to feel that these powerful concerns owned the park, and that tourists who did not see fit to accept their accommodations were made to feel as uncomfortable and as much humiliated as possible....I could but note the marked contrast between this and the uniformly polite and obliging disposition which was always manifested by Professor Wylie's employees toward everyone. In fact he is to be commended...I was very much pleased at the way Mr. Wylie cares for his patrons.¹²⁶

Shelton's experience with the hotel and railroad company as a Wylie patron was not an isolated incident. Hundreds of patrons reported similar instances of obstreperous and churlish attitudes by the employees of the hotel syndicate. In defense of all of Wylie's past and future patrons, Shelton presented the Secretary of Interior with his personal vindication of the Wylie Camping Company.

The people who have sought Professor Wylie's Camps are among the best in the country, and though some of them are doubtless unable to pay for the more expensive class of accommodations at the hotels, being teachers and ministers of the gospel, they probably take home with them more than is calculated to benefit the young and those who are unable to take even the less expensive trip, than is the case with the more wealthy, busy men of the world who prefer the other method.¹²⁷

Shelton wholeheartedly disagreed with Colonel Young's recommendation to turn the camps over to the hotel company and concluded that, "the abolishment of the Wylie Camps would inevitably result in building up what is now too much fostered by the Railroad, Hotel, and Transportation Companies, of a contemptible tourist caste in the

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

park, which is un-American and should not be tolerated.”¹²⁸ Obviously in Shelton’s mind, wealth and power did not always promise civility.

Attorney R.L. Keester of Alma, Nebraska endorsed Wylie’s petition for a long term lease with his reflection of his “delightful and easy trip” as well as lobbying for the government to uphold its commitment to the original promise of Yellowstone’s establishment. “I urge this matter because I desire to see the great body of the American people have the pleasure of seeing this park and that the park may be maintained for the benefit of all of the people, and not the especial few who can afford to spend almost a fortune to see its beauties,” he wrote to Senator John M. Thurston on January 11, 1898.¹²⁹ As an attorney, Keester apparently believed that impartiality should prevail.

E.A. Carlton, the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Montana echoed Keester’s sentiments with even stronger language. In his letter he condemned the proposal that the railroad and hotel company take over Wylie’s permanent camps, citing a need to hold fast to American values and republican ideals.

The Nation’s pleasure ground belongs to the people, and we sincerely trust that those who have control of it will not suffer all its privileges as to hotels and transportation to become monopolized by these Companies and the Northern Pacific Railroad. Whenever the time comes that these Companies secure an absolute monopoly of the park privileges, then the travel to the park will in my judgment, greatly decrease, and the object of the National Government in setting it aside as a National Park will have been, in a large measure, thwarted.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²⁹ Keester quoted in Lamar and Blanchard, *In the Department of Interior, Washington DC, Application of William Wallace Wylie for Lease in The Yellowstone National Park with the Privilege of Furnishing Camping Accommodations. Reply to Protest of Captain Anderson and Discussion of Park Combinations*, 33.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

Carlton was concerned that loyal American citizens would end up being railroaded by corporate monopolies in a place that was designated as a national pleasuring ground, a place that he believed should offer all the liberties of American life.

In the spring of 1898 the Secretary of Interior ruled in favor of William Wallace Wylie maintaining the operation of the permanent camps—on an annual license. For the next nine years W.W. Wylie operated his permanent camps on yearly permits. But each year until 1905, when he sold the company to Livingston businessman A.W. Miles, W. W. Wylie soldiered on with his mission to acquire a long term lease, which he believed would enable him to share Yellowstone with *all* the people.

CHAPTER 4

PLEASURE WITH A PURPOSE: THE GRAND TOUR OF YELLOWSTONE

“Civilization may depend for its roots upon the way in which work is done; but it depends for its finest flower upon the use of leisure,” opined sociologist C. Delise Burns in 1932.¹³¹ Indeed, most leisure pursuits for nineteenth-century Americans were generally viewed as the antithesis of work duties, but more important they were perceived as opportunities to engage in personally creative and constructive activities. Work usually consisted of the labor or task of earning a living, which imposed prescribed obligations of one’s time without much regard to personal fulfillment. Conversely, leisure comprised the free or unfettered time after the “practical necessities of life had been attended to.”¹³² At the most fundamental level, leisure and work were both defined by time, but the value of leisure depended on how that time was used.

Typically referring to deeds that resulted in “something produced or accomplished by effort, exertion, or exercise of skill,” work often marked one’s worth and identity.¹³³ However, many nineteenth-century middle-class travelers applied that definition of work to some leisure activities, such as a Yellowstone holiday with the educationally-styled tours of Wylie Camping Company. For their “effort, exertion, and exercise,” Wylie patrons were rewarded with constructive leisure time that furnished pleasure with a purpose, an enhanced sense of self, and thus an enriched life experience.

¹³¹ C. Delise Burns, *Leisure in the Modern World* (New York: Century Co., 1932), 58-59.

¹³² Martin H. Neumeyer and Ester S. Neumeyer, *Leisure and Recreation: A Study of Leisure and Recreation in their Sociological Aspects* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1949), 19.

¹³³ *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 1993), 1363.

The Grand Tour

Traveling great distances for education was certainly not a new concept in tourism by the time that nineteenth-century Americans began making journeys to Yellowstone and the West. Several centuries before railroads made travel across America accessible, aristocratic and wealthy Europeans had been traveling on the European Grand Tour. The Grand Tour was a method by which wealthy young men of the seventeenth century completed their education by traveling, studying, and immersing themselves in the arts, antiquities, literature, and culture of foreign countries. These transcontinental jaunts were generally undertaken with the leadership of an informed guide, and they followed a traditional route through all the important cultural centers of Europe, including Paris, Geneva, Turin, Milan, Venice, Naples and Rome. One of the goals of this extensive journey was to help upstanding European gentlemen develop social and intellectual skills that would serve to polish their social comportment. It was expected that after spending anywhere from four months to two years abroad studying history, geography, climate, clothes, food, art, trade relations, politics, and architecture, one would return with a broadened mind as well as autonomy, self-confidence, and poise.¹³⁴

While the Grand Tour was largely limited to gentlemen in seventeenth-century Europe, advances in transportation as well as in economics and politics during the eighteenth century opened this journey to other segments of society. Even though they had limited financial resources, the European bourgeoisie (middle class) sent their young

¹³⁴ Lynne Withy, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997), 7-8; John Towner, "The Grand Tour: Sources and a methodology for an historical study of tourism," *Tourism Management* 5, no. 3 (September 1984): 215-222.

men on a limited Grand Tour as a means to prepare for their careers. The European Grand Tour included a few wealthy Americans by the nineteenth century, but the scope of their journeys differed significantly from the scholarly pursuits of European young men. Rather than obtaining knowledge and refinement, American upper-class citizens found context and meaning in their travels by collecting valuable paintings, marble sculptures, Venetian glass works, ornate tapestries, and other souvenirs of their visits to great European cities and the ancient sites of the Mediterranean. By the middle of the nineteenth century, further advancements in transportation systems that ranged from transcontinental railroads to ocean liners encouraged British tourism mogul Thomas Cook to develop all-inclusive tours to all parts of the world, including the American West. Cook's "packaged tours," offered lower costs and less risk to prospective travelers and essentially began the democratization of travel for the middle class on both sides of the Atlantic. Accordingly, larger segments of the world's populace, including women, were afforded the chance to participate in the experience of travel and the opportunity to broaden their knowledge base of the globe.¹³⁵

With the advent of American trans-continental railroad travel and the guided package tour, the Grand Tour of Yellowstone National Park became one of the first incentives for leisure tourism to the interior of the American West.¹³⁶ The Wylie camping operation filled this niche very early, with William Wallace Wylie offering guided tours of Yellowstone National Park and delivering well-planned, group excursions that provided the tourist with ease of travel as well as an educational adventure.

¹³⁵ Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours*, 156-157.

¹³⁶ Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone*, 1-2.

Similar to the European Grand Tour, the Wylie tour was undertaken in the company of a experienced guide and encompassed a standard itinerary that spanned six and one-half days. The circuit typically followed a counter-clockwise route through the park, with overnight stops at Apollinaris Spring (later Swan Lake), Upper Geyser Basin, Lake, and Canyon.¹³⁷ The tour began with Wylie coaches meeting the Park train in the morning at the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad.¹³⁸ Passengers would be taken to the Wylie Hotel in Gardiner where they were fed an early lunch. There they would re-pack luggage to meet the twenty-five pound weight limit, change into traveling clothes, don canvas dusters, and board coaches to begin their journey into “Wonderland.” The first stop was in Mammoth Hot Springs where knowledgeable drivers would take the tourists over the travertine terraces and describe the chief points of interest. About mid-afternoon tourists would once again board their respective coaches and travel another six miles to Apollinaris Spring, the first of four permanent camps located around the park. Tourists were met by the camp’s matron who escorted one and all to their respective accommodations for the evening. Guests rejoined each other for a warm supper in the dining tent, followed by songs and story telling around a campfire. At each of the camps, Wylie guests were treated to a repeat of this welcoming scene. Bright and early the next morning, the travelers were ready to begin their journey. By 7:30 am the coaches were loaded and off to Upper Geyser Basin. After a guided walking tour of the Norris Geyser Basin, Wylie guests were treated to a sumptuous hot lunch at Wylie’s Gibbon Lunch

¹³⁷ As train travel expanded to other gateway cites such as West Yellowstone and Cody, the route differed slightly, but always operated in a counter-clockwise pattern.

¹³⁸ Due to a land dispute that prevented the extension of tracks to Gardiner until 1902, the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad from 1883 until 1902 was three miles north of the park’s entrance in Cinnabar, Montana.

Station, sometimes referred to as “Sleepy Hollow.” From there they enjoyed a ride along the Madison River, with stops to visit the “Mammoth” Paint Pots and Fountain Geysers in the Lower Geysers Basin before arriving at the Upper Geysers Basin.¹³⁹ Unlike all the other tours of the park, Wylie guests enjoyed two nights at this location, which gave them ample time to be led through the geysers basin and to learn the geological workings as well as the names of dozens of geysers and hot springs. Until the building of the Old Faithful Inn in 1904, the Wylie Way was the only route by which one was afforded more than a few hours at the Upper Geysers Basin with a touring company. On the third day, Wylie guests would continue southward, stopping for lunch at the Thumb of Lake, where they would board the Steamer Zillah for a boat ride to Lake Camp. Arriving around 4:00 pm gave them time for trout fishing before supper, followed by yet another rousing round of songs and stories around the campfire. The next two nights were spent at Canyon Camp where once again Wylie guests were given plenty of time to tour and become intimately acquainted with the geological processes of the earth in what most travelers thought was the zenith of the park. This educational touring system hosted thousands of middle-class travelers through its lifetime, many of whom believed that the Wylie way was the most thorough method to see the park.¹⁴⁰

A Thoroughgoing System

Marguerite Shaffer in her essay, “Seeing America First: The Search for Identity in the Tourist Landscape,” suggested that middle-class tourists strove to escape the limitations

¹³⁹ Today’s Fountain Paint Pots.

¹⁴⁰ W.W. Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps* (Helena: State Publishing Co., [1899]), 2-9.

of their respective social settings and to transcend the boundaries of class status.¹⁴¹ In doing so, many middle-class tourists could see themselves as individuals rather than merely products of their economic and social environment. Accordingly, leisure tourism became one of the defining collective characteristics of the late nineteenth-century middle-class profile.

While packaged tourism has been roundly criticized by many historians for creating stereotyped and scripted experiences of Yellowstone, I contend that these thoroughgoing systems of travel, such as the Wylie tours, offered (and still offer) travelers a deeper, richer, and more comprehensive experience by not only providing basic human needs but advancing higher intellectual needs as well. Not having to worry about where to find food, water, and shelter as well as not having to be concerned with where to go and what to see, most Wylie travelers were able to focus on feelings of excitement, intellectual satisfaction, and unreserved enjoyment. E.H. Archer, a cashier from Frederick, Oklahoma proclaimed in a letter to the Wylie Camping Company that, “[w]e unhesitatingly say that for real pleasure, for seeing the most and seeing it in a most pleasing, instructive way, for getting the most fun out of the outing, yours is by the far the best way.” Essentially, the all-inclusiveness of the Wylie tours helped Archer and his party to realize an optimal adventure to Yellowstone. Psychologist Abraham Maslow has termed this type of occurrence as a “peak experience.”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Marguerite Shaffer “Seeing America First: The Search for Identity in the Tourist Landscape,” in *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 3.

¹⁴² Abraham Maslow quoted in Knudson, Cable, and Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, 9.

According to Maslow's *A Theory of Human Motivation*, there are five encoded human needs that range in order of importance from basic physiological needs such as food and water to safety, belonging, esteem, and the optimal psychological level of self-actualization or "moments of highest happiness."¹⁴³ His theory posits that as each of the five needs are met in sequence, the next need can become a focus, thus effecting a step-by-step progression toward total personal fulfillment.¹⁴⁴ For many Wylie travelers, accomplishing this type of individual fulfillment, albeit on a small scale, meant a more meaningful and enjoyable experience in Yellowstone. Viewing this hierarchy of needs as a pyramid, food, water, and shelter represented the most basic level of required elements for human existence.

A physician from New York City, Dr. William Gilfillan, was exceptionally satisfied with these essential needs as supplied by the Wylie Camps. Being a health care professional, he likely viewed the camps with a bit more of a skeptical eye than the average person, but in fact found that "the accommodations in the camps were extremely comfortable; excellent beds; everything absolutely clean; food wholesome and sustaining and abundant, and the personnel of the camps extremely courteous and intelligent."¹⁴⁵ Rev. Cross gave his blessing to the Wylie camp operation writing, "We were delighted with the employees, teams, camps, beds, tables, plan of the trip, etc."¹⁴⁶ Another guest marveled at the level of comfort afforded every guest when one considered the limited

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁴⁴ Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (July 1943), 371; For further examination see Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1998); Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987).

¹⁴⁵ Gilfillan quoted in W.W. Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps* (Helena: State Publishing Co., [1905]), 20.

¹⁴⁶ Cross quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1905], 20.

resources and vast distances to supply an operation that seemed in the middle of nowhere. “It was somewhat of a surprise to me to find...every convenience and comfort for guests in this vast wilderness,” observed visitor Pauline Guthrie in 1900. “When one stops to consider that everything must be carried overland, in some instances from eighty to one hundred miles,” she continued, “it is a marked evidence of the progress we have attained.”¹⁴⁷ Even today, with all the “progress we have attained” and all the technology available, the remoteness as well as unpredictable weather of Yellowstone has continued to create challenges to tourist and concessioner supply lines.

Thus, relieved of the worry about where to find food, water, and shelter, the Wylie tourist was able to ascend to Maslow’s next level of need: safety. Even though the majority of the “savage” Indians had been placed on reservations and the transcontinental railroad had brought an appearance of civilization to the West by the time mass tourism took hold in Yellowstone, travelers’ fear of the unknown still prevailed. Traveling within a group (safety in numbers, which is still a prevalent notion in Yellowstone), as well as under the guidance of stagecoach drivers, tour escorts, camp boys, and matrons who had a familiarity with the region, brought a sense of security to many apprehensive travelers. People from as far away as Pennsylvania and Minnesota put their faith in Professor Wylie not only to provide an enjoyable trip but a psychologically comfortable one as well. To this end, J.C. Klauder from Philadelphia remarked that:

The management of the Permanent camps is as good as that of any hotel in the country , while the help are all refined, polite, and well informed people who receive and entertain you in the good old American style, without any foreign thrills.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Pauline K. Guthrie, “The Yellowstone Park,” *Dubuque Sunday Herald*, August 12, 1900.

¹⁴⁸ Klauder quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1899], 14.

Professor Grummen of Minneapolis echoed Klaunder's remarks:

My wife and I found the managers of Camps, drivers, and other employees to be men and women of unusual intelligence and Christian character. I am certain from observation and inquiry, that there is no other plan by which cultured people can make the trip so satisfactorily.¹⁴⁹

With safety secured, Wylie tour guests were free to embrace the third level of Maslow's needs: love and belonging. Touring Yellowstone with the Wylie excursions meant getting close, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Wylie's stagecoaches were designed for maximum capacity, not for privacy, and thus each passing group of travelers would essentially become so well acquainted over the course of six and one-half days, that they would often declare themselves a family. One instance of this was recorded by "Doc" Downing in his memoirs when he remembered that his first introduction to his family occurred "[w]hen the dinner bell rang at the Wylie Hotel in Gardiner...[and] a happy crowd of hungry tourists from all parts of the United States welcomed the sound."¹⁵⁰ While they sat down to their noon day meal as total strangers from Kansas, Montana, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Missouri, Mr. Downing recalled that "formality was forgotten and everyone chatted merrily." Awaiting the arrival of the stagecoach to begin their tour of Yellowstone, this group of ten travelers began to give each other nicknames, a practice that was then in fashion:

Helen Banker was laughingly called "Mother Dear" by one of the girls and the appellation was speedily adopted by the boys. Mr. Shockley, very proud of his home city was called "St. Louis," Mr. L.E. Downing was a druggist, so Mr. Walton suggested calling him "Doc," Mr. Mason Downing whose Eastern accent and manners amused the Western boys

¹⁴⁹ Grumman quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1904], 13.

¹⁵⁰ Louis E. "Doc" Downing, unpublished journal/scrapbook, 1911, Yellowstone National Park Library, 2.

was secretly called “Molly.” Later this was changed to “Cupid.” Mr. Walton was simply “Brother Lee.” Miss Grace Banker answered to “Grace Darling, brother Lee suggested “Jane Dear” for Miss James and “Sister” for Miss Altemeyer. Mr. & Mrs. Jewell whose names seemed appropriate remained the Jewells during the entire trip. By the time the state line between Montana and Wyoming was reached (about one mile from Gardiner), the family was well established. When Liberty Cap ... was reached “Mother” took the first photograph of the family.¹⁵¹

This family-like contentment and a wholesome sense of belonging experienced by many Wylie guests seemed to extend beyond the day’s travel and into the evening hours. As guests sat in circle around the campfire and shared thoughts, feelings, and impressions of the day, they participated in a unifying ritual whose origins stem from the earliest human cultures. Since the beginning of human time, this practice has served as a method of centering human interaction by giving each individual in the group a voice, while the circular campfire gathering created an integrated flow of communication.¹⁵² “Nothing breaks the ice quite so quickly as a camp fire, and friendships are formed around the circle that could not be in a hotel corridor. Nobody feels alone,” opined one contented traveler.¹⁵³

The sense of home-like comfort and belonging was further enhanced by the warm reception of the Wylie staff. Reverend J.A. Gilfillan of Minnesota confessed his affection for the Wylie workforce in this manner:

What impressed me most of all was the character of the employees of Mr. Wylie. They all seemed to be educated and college bred people. They all seemed to adopt us as friends; and they were friends with whom it was delightful to associate.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Downing, unpublished journal/scrapbook, 1911, 2-3.

¹⁵² Harriet J. Kupferer, *Ancient Drums, Other Moccasins: Native North American Cultural Adaptation* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 1-2.

¹⁵³ Cannon, “When Savages Wait on the Dudes,” 38.

¹⁵⁴ Gilfillan quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1899], 10.

This air of camaraderie and sense of welcome felt by patrons of the Wylie operation extended even to occasional stoppers who were not on the Wylie tour. One gentleman and his companion touring the park on bicycles availed themselves of the Wylie Camps accommodations and food service, enthused:

In company with a wheelman from Boston, I visited the Yellowstone National Park in August of this year. The trip from Gardiner to Golden Gate was a hard one...did not arrive at Willow Park Camp until after supper...plenty left for us...and by the way we were received by the persons in charge of the camp one would think we were old friends, although we had never seen any of them before. Receiving such treatment from perfect strangers added greatly to my enjoyment.¹⁵⁵

Many early day Yellowstone visitors believed that traveling with a group of people would enhance their enjoyment of the park. J. Herbert Roberts in his 1884 diary revealed a sense of disappointment with his Yellowstone adventure because he felt somewhat isolated on his private tour and affirmed that “[a] riding tour in the Park would be enjoyable, if a large party went together, with outfit, cooks, etc. Two is too small a party.”¹⁵⁶ Perhaps he felt lonely in “the pathless woods.”

Caught up in a world of increasing population and impersonal situations, many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century middle-class visitors traveling with the Wylie Camping Company relished the opportunity to communicate with like-minded brethren.

Pauline Guthrie conveyed this feeling:

Seated around the campfire many confidences are exchanged and it is surprising what close friendships are formed in so short a time. The tourists are a congenial set of people and formalities are cast aside when

¹⁵⁵ Redfield quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1899], 13.

¹⁵⁶ J. Herbert Roberts, *A World Tour Being a Years Diary Written 1884-'85* (Privately published, 1886), 40.

camping out. This adds greatly to the pleasure of the trip. We are all lamenting the time when we must part...”¹⁵⁷

Even as these transitory “families” bid each other farewell at the end of the Yellowstone tour and departed for their respective homes, many of these relatively short-lived personal interactions did not end with a genial parting hug and handshake. “[W]e started as strangers, but now we part as old friends...our hearts are full as we say ‘Good-bye,’” rhapsodized one Yellowstone sojourner.¹⁵⁸ The encircling camaraderie of their collective Yellowstone touring experience engendered life long associations for many travelers.

These fleeting, though meaningful, associations naturally led the way to the fourth level of Maslow’s needs: esteem. According to him, people found this fourth element through a feeling of contribution and a sense of recognition. Touring Yellowstone with a Wylie group offered tourists the opportunity to immerse themselves in an activity that broadened and expanded their awareness of nature, culture, and the world. For many visitors it was not enough to view Yellowstone with just the eye; they wanted to understand what they were viewing. Each person on the tour represented and reflected a different set of values, perceptions, and impressions of the sights and events they had experienced and each provided a contribution to the tour as a whole.

R.H.Waggner, a Christian Endearvorer from Ohio, believed that:

It was my good fortune to be listed with forty-five others of what I regard...as one of the most delightful and jolly crowds of people ever taken through the Park. When we registered and made up our party nearly everyone was an entire stranger to everybody else in the crowd, but the first evening...everybody seemed thoroughly acquainted, and all formality had disappeared, and all had determined to have the best time ever. From that time on I am frank to say, that I have never seen a like party get more

¹⁵⁷ Guthrie, “The Yellowstone Park,” 2.

¹⁵⁸ J.L.P., *A Journey to Alaska* (Privately published, 1891), 31.

real pleasure out of a trip than did our “Bunch” of forty-six. The party was composed of people from nearly every state in the Union.¹⁵⁹

Combined with educational interpretation by the Wylie guides, this group participation gave each individual a certain sense of personal achievement. Wylie’s interactive and interpersonal educational environment offered his tourists the opportunity to develop and expand their inner selves as well as their outer personalities.¹⁶⁰

The fifth and final level of Maslow’s pyramid of human needs is self actualization. In their book *Outdoor Recreation: Enrichment for a Lifetime*, authors Hilmi Ibrahim and Kathleen Cordes proposed that “leisure provides an arena in which personal values are shaped,” and they also suggested that leisure provides an ideological space “in which the individual may reach the highest potential of which he or she is capable.”¹⁶¹ For many Wylie visitors to Yellowstone, personal impressions and emotional sensations reflected suppressed yearnings rooted in their own individuality. Dorothy Pardo found the voice of her innermost self during a brief stop at Kepler Cascades. “I lingered after the others had returned to the carriage, looking down into the canyon, where the waters went rushing, falling, calling to my soul to follow,” she wrote, “and the tears came into my eyes, for I was rebellious that I must go with the others when I belong here—here in the wilderness, where dwelt also Peace and Freedom.”¹⁶² Travel, leisure, and recreation offered people emancipation from the shackles of their working day social restraints and allowed them the freedom to explore their unconscious character. While most travelers only experienced the park for a limited time, the Wylie tours facilitated that experience by

¹⁵⁹ Waggener quoted in A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company*, 1908, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Meinig, “The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene,” 33-48.

¹⁶¹ Ibrahim and Cordes, *Outdoor Recreation*, 18.

¹⁶² Pardo, “Dorothy-In-Wonderland,” 30.

providing a step-by-step progression to a fuller and more meaningful encounter with Yellowstone.

Outdoor Life for Health and Well Being

Middle-class progressives believed by the end of the nineteenth-century that leisure was not folly, but rather necessary for a balanced life and advocated taking care of the body as well as expanding the mind.¹⁶³ Theodore Roosevelt professed that the strenuous life was the only life worth living: an active life out-of-doors. Roosevelt himself set a spirited example of enjoying the outdoors in a national park when he and John Muir toured Yosemite in 1903 on horseback and slept under the stars. Attraction to outdoor life represented a change in the character of travel and in attitude toward the travel experience for both Europeans and Americans as the tourists' gaze turned to the American West. "Anything that encourages life in the open...sleeping under the stars, is part of the Craftsman ideal," claimed an author in the May 1915 *The Craftsman*, a magazine that promoted the simple and airy lifestyle of the Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁶⁴ Touting the virtues of outdoor life, this author proclaimed, "Outdoor living is not just for daylight hours. Physicians advocated outdoor sleeping for all people suffering from nervousness, insomnia, or tuberculosis, in addition to those who were quite healthy."¹⁶⁵

By staying in the Wylie camps and living the outdoor life, middle-class tourists encountered a nature that was by all accounts "more intellectually accessible—that is

¹⁶³ George Moore, M.D., *Man and His Motives* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1862), v.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Catherine Kuland and Lori Zabar, "Living Outdoors," *Style 1900, The Quarterly Journal of the Arts and Crafts Movement* 13 (November, 2000): 38. The Arts and Crafts movement was at its height between 1880 and 1910.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

more available to be felt, heard, and smelled.”¹⁶⁶ This innovative method of outdoor life became a model for many people to wholly experience nature in Yellowstone as well as in other national parks. Wylie’s Yellowstone touring parties experienced a nature very different from that of the well-to-do hotel guests. One Wylie guest commented that, “I am satisfied that we saw the Park in a far more thorough... manner than we could in any other way...and sleeping in the camps far more ...in harmony with the surroundings than would have been sleeping in the hotels.”¹⁶⁷ Wylie’s camps offered the visitor a way to more closely experience nature.

This ability to study nature close up, the benefits of outdoor living, and the individuality and informality allowed by camp life attracted large numbers of travelers to the Wylie operation. Through the years, Wylie collected hundreds if not thousands of testimonials attesting to the merits of his camp life vacations, such as this one from Charles E. Beecher, Professor of Historical Geology at Yale University: “To my mind it is the most appropriate method of living in the park, and the camp life appeals to a large number of tourists and other people who are taking their summer vacations for health, recreation, and instruction.”¹⁶⁸ Certainly, Wylie would have been hard pressed to acquire a better affirmation of his outdoor educational camping-and-leisure system than an endorsement from a Yale professor.

¹⁶⁶ Mark Daniel Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 51.

¹⁶⁷ Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1899], 12.

¹⁶⁸ Beecher quoted in Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1904], 16.

Rivaling for Recognition

While tourism in general enabled middle-class Americans to shape a sense of personal as well as class identity, tourism to the West, specifically to the country's first national park, helped them to shape a sense of national identity. In his 1899 *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen viewed tourism behavior as a marker of class status. However, he argued that middle-class travelers were emulating travel habits of the wealthy, who saw leisure as a "chief marker of gentility." While the middle class may have shared this viewpoint, they also considered leisure as a chief marker of self-improvement. The volumes of books on manners and codes of conduct that proliferated during the nineteenth century point to the emergence of a set of principles and ethics that set the middle-class apart from both the wealthy and the working class.¹⁶⁹ Social mores of education, health, and decorum played heavily into middle-class notions of leisure, recreation, and tourism. In Yellowstone, unlike most other travel destinations in the West, the Wylie Camping Company enabled the middle class to develop its own sense of style, social customs, and values of leisure. As the nation's first national park, Yellowstone connected middle-class citizens to the country's geographic heritage. The Wylie way offered a sense of tourism that was specifically designed for middle-class Americans to engage their own country with their own sense of leisure ethic.

¹⁶⁹ See for example, [Robert Tomes] *The Bazar Book of Decorum: The Care of the Person, Manners, Etiquette, and Ceremonials* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873); Sarah Annie Frost, *Frost's Laws and By-Laws of American Society: A Condensed but Thorough Treatise on Etiquette and Its Usages in America, Containing Plain and Reliable Directions for Deportment in Every Situation in Life* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1869); Cecil B. Hartley, *The Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette, and Manners of Politeness; Being a Complete Guide for a Gentleman's Conduct in All His Relations towards Society...From the Best French, English, and American Authorities* (Boston: DeWolfe, Fisk and Co., 1873).

The middle-class tourists who fully engaged themselves in the Wylie tours understood that Yellowstone was a dynamic and ever changing place. They understood that six and one-half days of touring was barely an introduction to the park's natural science and history and many middle class tourists made repeated trips to the park. Wylie's tours made camping in Yellowstone fashionable for families, couples, commercial clubs, single gentlemen and even unescorted women. Moreover, Wylie created an American middle-class sense of travel style that changed the outlook of Yellowstone tourism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century.

While the camps gained popularity with the touring public, the hotel company promoted by the Northern Pacific Railroad saw Wylie's operation as financial threat and "tried everything under the sun" to get him out of the park.¹⁷⁰ For several years the Northern Pacific Railroad had engaged in discriminatory ticket pricing tactics by charging a higher rail fare to travelers who were not touring the park with the railroad's subsidiary, the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company. In 1904 that discrimination became extremely conspicuous. Thousands of people traveling to and from the St. Louis World's Fair that year made side trips to Yellowstone. However, Wylie passengers found that their rail fare was eleven-dollars and twenty-five cents higher (a substantial sum in those days) than the hotel tourists. This unfair pricing structure undermined the value of Wylie's tours and critically affected his bookings. What initially promised to be a booming tourist season for Wylie ended with a dismal count of only twelve-hundred and eighty-five guests for the entire summer. In comparison, the hotel company hosted over eight thousand visitors. Bolstered by his attorney, George Lamar and the Interstate

¹⁷⁰ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 21.

Commerce Commission (ICC), Wylie decided to take on the biggest challenge of his life—a lawsuit against the Northern Pacific Railroad.¹⁷¹

In 1905 Wylie sued the Northern Pacific Railroad for refusing to sell his tickets in combination with rail fare during the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. After two days of testimony, the ICC determined that the Northern Pacific Railroad was in violation of the Interstate Commerce Law. Their conclusion stated: "In our judgment the Northern Pacific has no right to make one rate for passengers whose journey ends at the terminus of the its branch line and a lower rate for those passengers who travel beyond that point by the stages of the transportation company or who patronize the hotels of the association." The commission also held that the railroad should "conduct and control all its operations relating to the transportation of passengers to the park as to afford such passengers full and equal opportunity." Their final order decreed that the railroad should "cease and desist from all acts and practices which restrict the freedom and opportunity of tourists to select the means of conveyance and entertainment within the park, and allow free and fair competition between all persons authorized to provide facilities therefor[e]." ¹⁷² This order insured fair play not only for the Wylie Camping Company but for all Yellowstone tourists who wanted to exercise their American right to choose their style of travel.

¹⁷¹ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 22.

¹⁷² *Interstate Commerce Reports Volume XI. Decisions of the Interstate Commerce Commission of the United States. April, 1905 to August, 1906* (Rochester: The Lawyers Co-Operative Publishing Company, 1906), 154-155.

Even though he returned from Washington D.C. triumphant, Wylie had grown weary of what a later concessioner would term “bureaucratic process fatigue”¹⁷³ and decided to sell his camping business in the summer of 1905 to Livingston businessman A.W. Miles. However, Miles was not the only interested investor in this seemingly hostile take-over. Unbeknownst to nearly everyone at the time, Miles’s silent partner was Yellowstone hotel magnate, Harry Child. Miles acquired his one-third share of the camping company in lieu of the debt Wylie owed him for goods, and Child purchased his two-thirds share from Wylie under the guise of his Helena banker friend, A.L. Smith for \$15,000.¹⁷⁴ While this turn of events could have turned out to be yet another Yellowstone “tragedy of the commons,” the two businessmen wisely saw the value of maintaining the status quo of the Wylie Camping Company, including retaining the name, in both dollars and sense.

Child and Miles agreed to pay W.W. Wylie “fifteen hundred dollars per annum payable semi-annually from January 1, 1906” for his assistance with the new company and for his good will, but the contract also included a clause that stipulated that this would only be in effect “as long as it was mutually agreeable to both parties.”¹⁷⁵ Much to Wylie’s dismay this agreement was discontinued by Miles at the end of August 1907, when Wylie received a check and a letter stating that “his services were no longer needed” without any mention of future payment for his good will.¹⁷⁶ Nonetheless,

¹⁷³ “Grand Canyon shop closing after 102 years,” *Super Shopper*, Livingston, Montana, April 22, 2008, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Edward H. Moorman, “Yellowstone Park Camps History,” unpublished manuscript, 1954, Yellowstone National Park Library, 9.

¹⁷⁵ Moorman, “Yellowstone Park Camps History,” 8; Contract between Wylie, Miles, and Smith, Item 25 (Letter Box 13), Documents 6183 – 6566, S to Z, January 1, 1905 to December 31, 1906, Yellowstone National Park Archives, Doc. 6255.

¹⁷⁶ In 1916 Wylie sued the Wylie Permanent Camping Company for the failure to pay him for his goodwill and the use of his name from 1908 until 1916. Wylie initially won the case and was awarded a settlement of \$16,480 (\$12,000 plus 8% interest) in December 1916. *Bozeman Chronicle*, December 3, 1916. But an

through the next decade Miles continued to market the operation using W.W. Wylie's well-known name. Miles recognized that the continued popularity of the camping enterprise would require more than just name recognition, so he made sure that he carried on the company's business operation in much the same manner that Wylie had conducted it but on a larger scale.

In 1906, A. W. Miles reorganized the Wylie Permanent Camps and incorporated the operation with a slightly different name: the Wylie Permanent Camping Company. In addition to retaining a number of former employees, notably Edward H. Moorman as general manager of the company and Margaret "Lady Mac" McCartney¹⁷⁷ as manager of the camp employees, Miles hired Howard H. Hays as an administrative assistant. In his 1926 autobiography, Wylie praised Hays for being "a real genius in popularizing in the mind of the general public the camping method." But more significantly, Wylie credited Hays with originating the well known slogan "Wylie Way."¹⁷⁸

appeal by Miles and Child submitted in November 1919 to the Montana State Supreme Court resulted in a reversal of that decision on January 14, 1920, stating that goodwill cannot be considered a separate entity from the business. For further details on this court case see *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Montana, From December 17, 1919 to May 4, 1920, Official Report, Volume 57* (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Company, 1920). Just why Wylie waited for eight years to sue Miles and Child has remained a quandary of park historians for nearly a century. However, my research has posed one possible explanation that is derived from the fact that in 1916- 1917 Wylie was approached by the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad to establish camps in Zion and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon in the same style as the camps that he had pioneered in Yellowstone. Perhaps fearing a conflict from using his own name in connection with new camping operations in these parks, Wylie may have thought that it was prudent of him to file a suit to either get paid for the use of his name, in the event that he could no longer use it, or if denied a resolution, then he would be free to use the "Wylie" name in connection with his newly established camping operations in Zion and Grand Canyon. By the beginning of the summer season of 1917, this became a moot point as the "Wylie Way" in Yellowstone was consolidated with Shaw and Powell Camping Company, and renamed the Yellowstone Park Camps Company. The newly revamped operation also sported a new moniker – the "Camp Way"

¹⁷⁷ "Lady Mac" would rejoin Wylie in the operation of his Zion "Wylie Way" camp in 1917.

¹⁷⁸ Wylie, unpublished manuscript, 47.

Miles immediately set about expanding and improving all of the camps. The 1905 park season had hosted 26,188 visitors, nearly one-third of those traveling with camping companies. The volume of travelers seeking to travel the “Wylie Way” considerably overwhelmed the existing visitor capacity of sixty people at Willow Park, one-hundred forty people at Old Faithful, eighty people at Lake, and an unknown number, probably sixty to eighty people, at Canyon. During his first summer as President and General Manger in 1906, Miles erected a new camp nearer to Mammoth Hot Spring in a meadow at the southern end of Swan Lake Flat. This camp featured more and better quality tents, enhanced kitchen and dining facilities, and an element of modernity, flush toilets. Upon the completion of the Swan Lake Camp sometime during that summer, Miles abandoned the Willow Park camp near Apollinaris Spring.

In 1907, Miles established another new camp in a relatively pristine location in the northeastern part of the park, a few miles from Tower Fall. Several years earlier, President Theodore Roosevelt had camped near this spot for a week during his 1903 visit. The aptly named Camp Roosevelt was a twenty-four mile stage ride from Gardiner and was designed as a “delightful trip for those who have a maximum of two days to spend in the park, and also for those fortunate travelers who have time for an extended visit at this camp, combining with their sightseeing the joys of a real outing in the Pines.”¹⁷⁹ Here visitors could take in Lost Lake, Specimen Ridge, the Petrified trees, and Amethyst Mountain via horseback, go fishing in the Yellowstone or Lamar Rivers for native mountain trout, and enjoy exhilarating hot sulphur baths in porcelain tubs in a newly constructed bath house. Brigadier-General Hiram Chittenden believed the Camp

¹⁷⁹ A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1907), 20.

Roosevelt area to be “the most desirable of all in which to spend a season of rest and recuperation. It is full of attractions for the lover of Nature and the scientific inquirer.”¹⁸⁰

By the 1920s when middle-class visitors had become fully accustomed to leisure time and the freedom to do with it as one wished, this location advertised visitor activities that included walking trips, horseback riding, fishing, and “loafing.”¹⁸¹ According to a Camp Roosevelt brochure, by 1923 “idleness” had become an acceptable form of leisure for the American middle-class traveler.

During the first two years of his ownership of the Wylie Permanent Camping Company, Miles reconstructed and systematized all the camps. His renovations included “placing them in military appearance, putting walks therein, and procuring better sanitary conditions to meet the comforts and pleasures of the tourist.” These renovations proved to be a crucial element for the company as they now could accommodate large groups “with equally as good comforts as heretofore were given to small parties.” The “Wylie Way” could now offer four-room tents, two-room tents, and single-bed tents, which appealed to many of the large middle-class touring groups such as the Salt Lake Commercial Club. As these groups typically traveled with seventy-five to one-hundred or more guests, they appreciated the flexibility of the expanded accommodations. Even though the company now drew larger groups as well as small parties, neither the Wylie management nor the employees lost sight of providing excellent service to each and every guest. R.H. Waggener, who traveled with a group of forty-five Christian Endeavorers from Ohio in 1907, submitted that “in all my experience, I have never dealt

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁸¹ Howard H. Hays, *Yellowstone Vacations, Camp Roosevelt, 1923 Season: June 20-September 20* (Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1923), [4].

with a Company that was more universally considerate and courteous in every respect.”¹⁸² Regardless of the size of the group, whether two or two hundred, A.W. Miles, and the modernized Wylie Permanent Camping Company continued their adherence to the concept of providing comfort, economy, and a comprehensive Grand Tour of the “Wonderland of the World” that W.W. Wylie had so conscientiously originated.

¹⁸² Waggener quoted in Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company*, 1908, 23.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE LOVERS ROUTE: NATURE AT PLAY

The establishment of Yellowstone as a national park launched a new idea about western wilderness for Americans and Europeans alike—a mindset that originally began with wilderness as a mere physical location and eventually evolved into an idea that reshaped world views of nature. Yellowstone’s nature—geological, thermal, and faunal—made America’s first national park more than a geographic and geological wonder fixed in time. Yellowstone became a place for visitors to see, sense, and contemplate a world in flux, to be enchanted by the grandeur of its wonders, and to be educated on the scientific complexities of its dynamic nature.¹⁸³

Kaleidoscope of Views

Romantic painters such as Thomas Cole and Thomas Moran transformed the view of the unknown and formidable wild lands of the West into beautiful and picturesque landscapes with their monumental paintings. Images of beautiful landscapes “softened the images of wilderness so commonly associated with America” and invited many early writers and historians to extol the virtues of America’s nature.¹⁸⁴

Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, through their poetic rhetoric, proposed that Americans process that nature—the unknown wilderness—with intellectual prowess rather than fear. Incorporating impressions of the

¹⁸³ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Ibrahim and Cordes, *Outdoor Recreation: Enrichment for a Lifetime*, (Champaign, Illinois: Sagamore Publishing, 2008), 33-60.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas K. Murphy, *A Land Without Castles*, (Landham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001), 25.

subconscious, this rhetoric/prose combined cultivated observation and imagination, and fashioned a language that created a linguistic connection of humans to the natural world around them.¹⁸⁵

While not widely embraced as a religion, the philosophical ideas and enlightenment-based stimulus of Deism influenced a nineteenth-century belief system that counteracted the notion of divine revelation as a basis of truth. While believing that God existed and had created the physical universe, deists postulated that religious truths could be discovered by the application of reason and observation of the natural world, and they embraced the role of nature in spirituality.¹⁸⁶

Scientists Alexander von Humboldt and Ferdinand V. Hayden, with their first-hand observations of nature, created new perceptions of geography and geology, and formed new ways of understanding the physical world for many enlightened minds of the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁷ Through the writings of scientific explorers, Americans developed new ways of seeing the landscape of the West, comprehending its natural history, and understanding, experiencing, and responding to its distinct environment.

With the coming of the second great age of discovery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the previously held imaginary geography of the world became both reality and

¹⁸⁵ Krystyna Grocholski, "Transcendental Ideas: Education, American Transcendentalists as Teachers of their Times," *American Transcendentalism Web*, <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/ideas/edu-kg.html>.

¹⁸⁶ For ideas on deism see Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes*; Craig Nelson, *Thomas Paine, Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Birth of Modern Nations*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006).

¹⁸⁷ James G. Cassidy, *Ferdinand V. Hayden: Entrepreneur of Science*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2000), *passim*; Aaron Sachs, *The Humboldt Current: Nineteenth Century Explorations and the Roots of American Environmentalism*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006), *passim*.

ideology. “Men of science”¹⁸⁸ conducted maritime and overland expeditions, and furthered the legitimacy of world geographical knowledge with their contributions of expert observation and documentation. As these men of science recorded and published their findings in reports, exploration narratives, and scientific as well as popular journals, the world suddenly became more vast and expansive than was heretofore known. Thereafter, a new perception of geography and a new way of understanding the world emerged in many enlightened nineteenth century minds on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁸⁹

Through their personal explorations and elaborate writings, men of science such as Ferdinand V. Hayden transformed unknown geographical space into known landscapes, particularly the American West and its western wonderland Yellowstone National Park. In his essay “Sensing Leisure Spaces,” geographer John Urray emphasized that, “the eyewitness observation ... came to be viewed as the basis for scientific legitimacy.”¹⁹⁰ Using eyewitness observation and reason, and publishing volumes of information that they assembled, Hayden and his contemporaries transformed Yellowstone from mere geographic lore into scientific and geographic reality. Thus they broadened the geographical consciousness of Yellowstone and the American West in the minds of many nineteenth-century travelers.

Shedding light on the darkness of the wilderness, science erased the fear of wild places by giving them a new sense of landscape. Originally seen as a hindrance to

¹⁸⁸ The term *scientist* was coined by William Whewell in 1833, but it was not formally used in the United States until the 1850s and was not in common usage until the late 1800s.

¹⁸⁹ John Logan Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975), 252-254; Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-14; Sachs, *The Humboldt Current: Nineteenth Century Explorations and the Roots of American Environmentalism*, *passim*.

¹⁹⁰ John Urray, “Sensing Leisure Spaces,” in *Leisure and Tourism Geographies*, New York: Routledge, 1999, 37.

progress, a wild landscape such as Yellowstone was given official value as recorded scientific details of Yellowstone's geologic wonders encouraged the American government to set aside an area of undeveloped western land for the world's first national park. By the late nineteenth century, natural science became a new cultural hierarchy with which to challenge Europe. With Yellowstone, America created and developed an outdoor laboratory to scientifically and intellectually process its newly conceived natural heritage.¹⁹¹

Through recast views and revised language of this era, the character of the American West as well as Yellowstone emerged as both diverse and complex. Vast and strange, exotic and wild, Yellowstone embodied nearly all the actual and imagined characteristics of the West. This reformulated vision of Yellowstone and the West produced an awareness that helped to advance intellectual intersections of natural science and nature appreciation, religion and romanticism, education and social consciousness, and spirituality and the search for identity.

The Nature Lovers Route

In 1908, the Wylie Permanent Camping Company's yearly advertising campaign unveiled the first of many thematic approaches to touring the park. Subtitled their four-page brochure "The Nature Lovers Route," camping company owner, A.W. Miles and advertising agent, Howard Hays touted the "Wylie Way" as an "all-complete,

¹⁹¹ For further discussion of these ideas, see Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes*; Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*; Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes Since Ancient Times*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

comfortable, congenial, and economical tour of Nature’s ‘Wonderland.’¹⁹² Miles and Hays bolstered their advertising promises with letters from satisfied patrons who “annually attest [to] the popular appreciation of this ‘natural way’ of touring Yellowstone.”¹⁹³ “Your permanent camps furnish the only logical means of seeing and enjoying the beauties of Nature found in this National Reserve,” wrote one former Wylie guest.¹⁹⁴

That year, in addition to offering the Wylie Permanent Camping Company’s system of touring Yellowstone’s natural wonders from the north entrance at Gardiner via the Northern Pacific Railroad, the company also announced the availability of tours for passengers arriving at the west entrance via the Oregon Short Line (Union Pacific Railroad) in the town then named Yellowstone, Montana.¹⁹⁵ Beginning in mid-June 1908, the Oregon Short Line train steamed into the railroad station, graced with Gilbert

¹⁹² A.W. Miles, “The Nature-Lovers’ Route,” *Wylie Permanent Camping Company*, (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1908), 2.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ The town of West Yellowstone came into existence in 1907 with the extension of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks from its main line in eastern Idaho to the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park. According to Edwin Eagle, whose father Sam was one of the first pioneers and post master of the town from 1910 until 1926, West Yellowstone’s name has undergone several changes throughout the years. Edwin determined that when the area was nothing more than a stage crossing at the park’s entrance, letters sent to a few early settlers were simply addressed “the boundary.” Evidenced by old receipts as well as letters, the name “Yellowstone, Montana” was in use in July 1908, but by October 1908 the name had changed to “Riverside, Montana” presumably referring to the U.S. Army Riverside Soldier Station four miles inside the boundary. Although a subject of controversy with local residents as well as the Union Pacific Railroad, the name “Riverside, Montana” remained in use until January 31, 1910, when the town was renamed “Yellowstone, Montana.” But by the late teens, the “Yellowstone, Montana” postal designation had become a source of confusion as mail to the park was often sent to the wrong place and a pivotal point of political wrangling with other gateway communities as tourists mistakenly believed that the west entrance was *the* entrance to Yellowstone National Park. On January 7, 1920 the town experienced its last name change to “West Yellowstone, Montana.” Sam Eagle and Ed Eagle, *West Yellowstone’s 70th Anniversary 1908 to 1978* (West Yellowstone: Eagle Company, Inc. 1978), 2-6.

Stanley Underwood's magnificent rustic log and stone depot¹⁹⁶ at 6:30 a.m. Alighting from the train eager travelers were greeted by awaiting Wylie coaches and agents ready to transport them to the newly established Wylie Riverside Camp about one mile inside the park boundary. This picturesque camp located amid the pines on the banks of the Madison River gave Wylie passengers an opportunity to change clothes, arrange grips (that great old-fashioned word for luggage), and attain tickets for their six-day Park tour. After securing all the necessary arrangements, breakfast became the next order of business for all the travelers. After dining on biscuits and honey, pancakes with syrup, powdered eggs, and coffee, Wylie travelers boarded four-horse coaches and departed on their tour of the "Wonderland of the World."¹⁹⁷

The route from the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park traveled along the banks of the Madison River, through the beautiful forested scenery of Christmas Tree Park, and past sublime canyons with towering, rocky cliffs. Riding in open carriages at a leisurely pace with guides explaining in detail both minor and major features, and camping out "amidst the somber verdure of the northwest pines," offered Wylie Way tourists a *real outing* and a chance to fully experience Yellowstone's nature.¹⁹⁸ "Tourists in 'Wonderland' will gather a keener enjoyment and a more lasting pleasure if the *method* of travel harmonizes with the all-predominant *natural* characteristics of the region,"

¹⁹⁶ The Union Pacific Railroad served this station until the 1960s. While it no longer serves arriving railroad passengers, the recently restored rustic log depot continues to maintain its historical prominence today as the West Yellowstone Historic Center Museum and Archive. Eagle and Eagle, *West Yellowstone's 70th Anniversary 1908 to 1978*, 2.

¹⁹⁷ The author's explorations in 2007 of the area believed to be Riverside Camp revealed volumes of assorted sizes of tin cans with lead plugs, which date them to the early 1900s. These cans appear to be consistent with containers of the period believed to contain food items such as honey, powdered eggs, coffee, beans, and syrup. One wholly intact tin can revealed an imprint of "Royal Baking Company," and concretely substantiated the idea of biscuits as a menu item.

¹⁹⁸ Miles, "The Nature-Lovers Route," 2. Emphasis Miles's.

proclaimed the 1908 Wylie brochure.¹⁹⁹ During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, these *natural* characteristics of Yellowstone as well as the West had become defined by myriad social, cultural, religious, and scientific influences.

Seeing, Sensing, and Science

“The Wylie Way” with its camps situated in groves of pine trees at the edge of scenic meadows and near crystal mountain streams offered travelers an immersion into Yellowstone’s outdoor laboratory. The stylized 1908 Wylie “Nature Lovers Route” brochure and subsequent advertising during that year formally sanctioned what had for over twenty-five years been the substance of the camping company tour and operation. Nature lovers such as C. F. Barnes of Bristol, Connecticut believed that the Wylie Permanent Camping Company furnished the most “suitable environment in which to see the beauties of this Park in all its grandeur and wildness.”²⁰⁰ One guest revealed in the fact that “Wylie drivers and guides painstakingly pointed out all the special objects, and without rushing through, explained all the formations and wonders of the Park.”²⁰¹

Interest in natural science and the desire to understand the wild geological wonders of Yellowstone was not restricted to professionals of science by any means. In the late 1800s and early 1900s a proliferation of publications appeared on newsstands across America. The *American Journal of Science* published Hayden’s first report of Yellowstone for his scientific peers in 1872, the same year that *Nature*, a magazine of

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company*, 1908, 24.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

natural sciences for the general public, made its appearance on American newsstands. *American Naturalist* followed in 1873 with an article on geysers by T. B. Comstock and another piece on glacial phenomena by William Henry Holmes. *Popular Science Monthly* published several articles on Yellowstone from 1884 to 1893, and *Scientific American* tagged along in 1900 with reports on geysers and basaltic columns. *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Sport Travel and Recreation*, an ever popular magazine in the 1890s, routinely covered scientific topic for its active readers. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries science and the study of nature had seized more than just the attention of the observant scientist; it had also captured the attention of a perceptive American public, albeit to a limited degree. Even though science had become a professional discipline and its discoveries offered to the general populace in the late 1800s, the number of Americans who embraced science was still relatively narrow. One pioneering remedy to generate more support for science with upcoming generations was the nature study movement.

In the late 1890s the study of nature became a popular educational movement in the United States. Experiencing and understanding nature personally rather than from books became the credo of the country's nature study program. This movement encouraged the study of zoology, botany, geography, geology, physics, meteorology, and astronomy, but also invoked a sensory approach to the appreciation of nature, and nature's connection to human life. In many ways this movement mirrored earlier ideas put forth by Enlightenment scientist Alexander von Humboldt, who considered nature "as the refection of the image impressed by the senses upon the inner man, that is, his ideas and

feelings.”²⁰² With the stroke of a pen Humboldt connected nature with the aura of human life. Humboldt advocated and encouraged journeys to the unknown to experience the environment, behold the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque, and to interact with nature and thus enhance one’s life. For many visitors to Yellowstone it was not enough to view with just the eye; they wanted to feel and sense as well as intellectually understand what they were viewing.²⁰³

Thus, Yellowstone became a place of nature’s marvels to astound and awe all who encountered its landscape—a place where humans could experience and comprehend nature’s beauty and sublimity. More than just a visual experience, Yellowstone offered an encounter in which the all the senses were engaged Wylie tour guides offered interpretation of the park’s wonders and assisted their patrons in processing their sensory experiences. Through this type of eyewitness experience and guided interpretation, Yellowstone and its enchanting geological wonders became intellectually and meaningfully illuminated for many Wylie guests.

Religion, Romanticism, and Revelation

Changing values of nature emerged in the Enlightenment era when the sciences began to question traditional beliefs in God. This transformation separated new rational viewpoints of the physical earth from the blind-faith religious underpinnings that had previously permeated western society’s knowledge base. In America as well as Europe, philosophies of logic and reason overtook rigid doctrines of deeply-rooted religions,

²⁰² Humboldt quoted in Sachs, *The Humboldt Current* (New York: Viking, 2006), 43.

²⁰³ Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, “Nature, Not Books: Scientists and the Origin of the Nature-Study Movement in the 1890s,” *Isis* 96, no. 3 (September 2005): 324-352.

destabilized the hold of Christianity over society, questioned assumptions of political power, and challenged long-established governments. However, by the early to mid-nineteenth-century, Americans grew disheartened with a vision of life that was based solely on indifferent and detached principles of calculated rational thought.²⁰⁴

Invoking imagination, intuition, metaphysical musings, individualism, and democracy, romantic writers, artists, and musicians transformed the way European and American society thought about themselves and about the world around them. In addition to viewing nature as a work of art, romantics viewed nature as a living, dynamic organism to be seen, sensed, and valued. Many American romantics held that first-hand experiences of nature, such as Yellowstone, could be enriching and morally cultivating for many travelers, and postulated that in appreciating nature, humans could improve their personal individualistic potential.²⁰⁵ One Union Pacific Railroad advertisement in 1912 posited that once a businessman had been to Yellowstone's health giving climate that he could go back to every competitor he ever had and "eat 'em alive."²⁰⁶

A romantic philosophy of nature, poetic definitions of scenery, and the Deist belief that God had created the world but man was now in charge of its destiny, created a changed relationship of humans with the natural world. According to historian Stanford E. Demars in his *The Tourist in Yosemite 1855-1985*, a fundamental element of this philosophical relationship was the "assumption that Man, as the foremost creator of

²⁰⁴ Donald Kagan, Steven Ozment, and Frank M. Turner, *The Western Heritage* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001), 854-884; Nelson, *Thomas Paine, Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Birth of Modern Nations*, *passim*.

²⁰⁵ Krystyna Grocholski, "Transcendental Ideas: Education, American Transcendentalists as Teachers of their Times," *American Transcendentalism Web*, <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/ideas/edu-kg.html>.

²⁰⁶ *Winona Republican-Herald*, June 25, 1912.

Deity, occupied a pivotal position of what constituted attractiveness in the landscape.”²⁰⁷

To be sure, society and culture determined particular concepts of what represented scenic beauty.

Concepts of the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque fashioned by the philosophies of the romantic period, created emotional responses that often became sources of inspiration. These specific descriptions and meanings of scenic beauty were enumerated and classified by Edmund Burke in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1757. Pastoral landscapes and manicured gardens were often synonymous with the term *beautiful*. Landscapes with a more rugged appearance were considered *picturesque*. *Sublime* on the other hand was reserved for the grand, monumental forms of picturesque, and sometimes associated with danger.

William Cronon, in his “Uncommon Ground: Rethinking Human Place in Nature” (1996) claimed that the sublime was important because “rare places create an arena where one could experience the divine.”²⁰⁸ One of Wylie’s guests avowed her divine encounter with one of the West’s many places of sublimity, Yellowstone’s magnificent Grand Canyon:

...as I write the rocks about me are dotted with people gazing in speechless admiration on the great Grand Canyon. One thousand seven hundred feet from where I am seated to the river below and within a short distance the great falls, whose mighty roar can be heard miles away. I could look upon this scene forever and then fail were I to depend upon my descriptive powers to picture it to you.

²⁰⁷ Demars, *The Tourist in Yosemite*, 12.

²⁰⁸ William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking Human Place in Nature*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 70.

One thing certain, I can agree with the little girl who said, “here is where God and the angels live.”²⁰⁹

Literal and visual concepts of nature in poetry, prose, and paintings during the mid to late nineteenth-century created a romantic philosophy of nature that fashioned an esthetic characterization of scenery and a philosophical basis for the relationship of human beings to their natural world.

Canadian historian Patricia Jasen in her *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario* suggested that Burke’s work established a relationship between landscape, emotion, joy, and pleasure, and transferred that relationship to the cultural experience of nature. Jasen argued that there are “interconnected, close, and persistent relations between Romanticism and tourism.”²¹⁰ As an evolving American middle class cultivated the values of feelings and imagination, romanticism promoted an interest in the western wilderness as an embodiment of beautiful, picturesque, and the sublime landscapes, which became vital elements of tourism in Yellowstone. Frequently visitors couched their feelings as substitutes for a religious experience, as one Wylie guest recalled:

It was Sunday and in the services held around the camp fire that night, the judge voiced the general sentiment when he said reverently, “I think the greatest sermon has been preached by the canyon itself today.”²¹¹

Often concepts of religious fervor and impressions of spirituality become intertwined for many visitors when they observed some of Yellowstone’s magnificent geological features.

²⁰⁹ Guthrie, “The Yellowstone Park.”

²¹⁰ Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 12.

²¹¹ Cannon, “When Savages Wait on the Dudes,” 38.

Spirituality and Waxing Lyrical

For many of its guests, the guided interpretive excursions as well as the outdoor experience offered by the Wylie Permanent Camping Company contained deeper and more spiritual meanings than just the opportunity to view the wilds of the West; it meant experiencing the majesty of nature. In their writings Yellowstone's canyons, mountains, geysers, and hot springs often take on a spiritual dimension. A single woman traveling alone seemed to be overwhelmed by the majesty of imposing mountains when she arrived in Cinnabar to join a Wylie tour:

A purple haze hung over the mountains, and they lay before my enchanted eyes like soft, undulating folds of velvet, treeless and barren they were for the most part, but so rugged, so dauntless, so free, bespeaking the sterner element of the youthful soul – the soul that is free from pettiness, is bold and unafraid.²¹²

And upon reaching the entrance to the park the vastness of Yellowstone's environment encouraged her mind's eye as she effervesced:

[T]he imagination fancies Nature in the personification of a mother standing with open arms to welcome her children home. It is home to the freedom-loving soul – one wishes that no others save those who love Nature in all her moods, might ever pass through the massive stone archway marking the entrance to the Nation's fairyland.²¹³

This traveler not only saw and admired Yellowstone's natural world, but was also able to eloquently process a metaphysical connection of nature to the human spirit.

According to sociologists Hilmi Ibrahim and Kathleen Cordes, a spiritual sense of the world requires a "keen appreciation of nature as well as a kinship with one's fellow

²¹² Pardo, "Dorothy-In-Wonderland," 4.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

beings in an orderly universe.”²¹⁴ The authors also suggest that spiritual experiences generally occur when the senses are unusually heightened, such as when immersed in the wilderness; where the heady scent of pines, the babble of a sinuous mountain stream, the glow of soft light at sunrise, or the caress of a gentle wind provide opportunities to encounter the hidden beauty and complexities of life’s mysteries and mystique.²¹⁵

Wylie guest Robert Dellett recorded his party’s captivated enjoyment of nature as they watched a rare eruption of Giant Geyser late in the day.

[W]e stand and gaze in wonder and admiration for the sun is setting, and has almost reached the horizon, and in the blaze of that setting sun, as the rays strike through the great masses of steam and spray there are formed some of the most gorgeous and perfect rainbows the eye of man ever saw. We pass from side to side to see it in all lights, and to get the full effects of light and shadow, and in the thunder of this solid six or eight feet of solid water as it is hurled into space together with the roar from the mighty mass as it falls back on the formation we grow wild with enthusiasm...and *fairly intoxicated* with the sights. I shall never forget the grandeur of that scene.²¹⁶

Many Wylie visitors revealed an increased sense of awareness as they “experienced themselves in experiencing the Yellowstone landscape.”²¹⁷ Some even found a physical response to this experience:

It was pleasant to go alone to the river’s side not far from camp—and lose myself in the wildness that was all about me—the rushing river, the steep, rocky, and wooded bank on the other side. The primitive wildness of it all called to the savage in my nature, and found a response.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Ibrahim and Cordes, *Outdoor Recreation*, 19.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Dellett, “Yellowstone Park,” [5]. Emphasis Dellett’s.

²¹⁷ Jakle, *The Tourist*, 46.

²¹⁸ Pardo, “Dorothy-In-Wonderland,” 20.

Not all encounters with Yellowstone's nature evoked sensations of pleasure. A few places displayed a less than agreeable nature to visitors. One such feature was the Devil's Slop Barrel.

A barrel shaped shell-like formation rising some four or five feet above the surface of the surrounding ground and about six feet in diameter, filled about half way up with a seething, boiling, thrashing, mass of vile looking sulphurous muddy water...serves as a reminder of how close that "individual" is to the good and pure at all times.²¹⁹

Needless to say, few visitors dallied for very long at this menacing location that suggested that Hell and its satanic ruler were apparently not too far below the surface.

Perhaps seeking to test the boundaries of nature or themselves, some visitors created their own encounters of discomfort. While viewing the Canyon from Artist's Point, several members of Doc Downing's group climbed out on a rocky ledge many feet above the point. Unprepared for the "stillness and vastness" of the canyon depths below, they found their precarious situation overwhelming and "hurriedly scrambled down" to safety. For these intrepid travelers, the power of nature seemed to overshadow their inquisitiveness. Nevertheless, this brief encounter with dangers of raw nature did little to disrupt their pleasure of their experience of Yellowstone's nature.

Nature's Essence

Yellowstone's natural wildness seemed to inspire and uplift the soul in a world that by the late 1800s had become increasingly artificial with the explosions of large cities and industrialization. Wylie's tours and outdoor camping life offered travelers an escape from the mundane routine of city life. Many Wylie guests thoroughly enjoyed their park

²¹⁹ Dellett, "Yellowstone Park," [3].

experience and sought to share that enthusiasm. In a testimonial letter, Dr. William Gilfillan of New York City enthusiastically proclaimed, “If you want to see the Park and study its beauties, by all means go by the Wylie Camps.”²²⁰ Mr. and Mrs. M.L. Severy of Boston, Massachusetts also wrote a letter wholeheartedly endorsing the Wylie tours that declared, “[w]ere we to go a dozen times again we should wish to go each time with Mr. Wylie and shall always urge any friends contemplating the trip to make it as we did, in what seems to be by far the most enjoyable way.”²²¹

Thus, William Wallace Wylie, his pioneering transportation and camping operation, and his touring philosophy produced an early model for true nature appreciation by encouraging education that harmonized with living the outdoor life.²²² Through his original style of park tourism, many travelers developed an intimate connection with Yellowstone’s nature, which awed and thrilled all who saw, sensed, and studied its natural environment – “The Wylie Way.”

²²⁰ Wylie, *Yellowstone National Park: Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1899], 12.

²²¹ Wylie, *Wylie Permanent Camps*, [1905], 25.

²²² Wylie began his tours in 1880.

CHAPTER 6

EPILOGUE

By 1909, the phrase “Wylie Way” had become synonymous with middle-class tourism to Yellowstone. That summer 7,717 of the park’s 15,594 visitors chose to tour the park via the Wylie route. Under the innovative direction of promotional agent, Howard Hays, the Wylie Permanent Camping Company flourished with its opening of general offices in Livingston, Gardiner, and Salt Lake City as well as co-operative arrangements with travel agencies in Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Dallas, and Minneapolis. Hays also expedited massive advertising crusades to promote and sell the “Wylie Way” beginning in 1907.²²³

His promotional campaigns to sell the “Wylie Way” were as comprehensive as the tours. In addition to catchy nationwide newspaper ads and smaller leaflets, Hays produced an annual forty-one page brochure that explained why the Wylie camps were different and included a “Pictorial Exposition of Camping de Luxe.”²²⁴ Professional photographs taken by Harry S. Shipler of Salt Lake City, Utah, displayed wood-floored, framed, and double-topped tents with cozy bed chambers that featured real mattresses, rugs, wood stoves, tables and chairs as well as interiors of the dining and recreation tents.

The photographs spread throughout the detailed brochures probably did as much to

²²³ Harry C. Benson, *Annual Report of the Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of Interior 1909* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909); A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1909), 41. To date the first known usage of the moniker “Wylie Way” appeared in the *Maiden Rock Press*, a Wisconsin newspaper on May 31, 1907. Research on this well publicized early twentieth-century catch phrase has revealed that the name may have originated from the many testimonials in 1906 that called the Wylie Camping Permanent Camping Company the best “way” to tour the park.

²²⁴ A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1914), [9-10].

capture the attention of prospective guests as did several pages of positive testimonials. Hayes knew his audience well and addressed it accordingly. “To the comfort of the ‘Wylie Way’ add its novelty, its healthfulness, its friendliness, and its moderate charges: the result is an ideal vacation trip,” he pledged in a 1915 brochure.²²⁵ Restful beds, cordial employees, home-style food, comfortable coaches, and wholesome fun gave the “Wylie Way” a personality all its own; a personality which it celebrated in an exhibit at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.²²⁶

Yellowstone National Park was reproduced for the Panama Pacific Exposition by the Union Pacific System, albeit on a smaller than life size scale. The “new” Yellowstone was situated on the amusement avenue called the “Zone” at the far eastern end of the Expo grounds. The Old Faithful Inn, an exact exterior replica complete with hewn-logs, railed balconies, multi-gabled roof and eight flapping pennants, dominated the exhibit. Inside the massive 47,000 square foot building, the dining hall could seat two thousand guests without crowding. The dining hall was also the scene of daily concerts by the official Exposition orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and others. In front of the Inn was the three-hundred foot circular “Top of the World” topographical map of Yellowstone complete with all its magnificent features. And just like the real Yellowstone, the exhibit included a Wylie camp.²²⁷

This monumental exhibit of Yellowstone, the largest and, at the time, the most costly show sponsored by a railroad, was the conception of Joseph R. Kathrens, Vice President

²²⁵ A.W. Miles, *Wylie Permanent Camping Company* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1915), 11-12.

²²⁶ A.W. Miles, *The Yellowstone News: For Friends of the “Wylie Way:” Spring 1915*, Livingston, Montana, 1.

²²⁷ Howard Hays, *An Appreciation* (San Francisco: Union Pacific Railroad, 1914), 3-16.

of Lesan Advertising Company of New York and Chicago. Kathrens, a twenty-five year veteran of managing large enterprises at world's fairs, enjoyed a personal intimacy with Yellowstone and with the Wylie Camps. Prior to reproducing the Yellowstone exhibit, Kathrens made two trips to Yellowstone via the "Wylie Way." In addition to faithfully recreating a visual glimpse of tourist life in a Wylie "canvas city" for the San Francisco Expo, Kathrens captured the atmosphere of novelty and hospitality that characterized the Wylie Camping system. Wylie publicist, Howard Hays, believed that any former "Wylie Way" guest who came upon the scenic reproduction of a permanent camp in the Yellowstone Expo exhibit would be delighted by the familiar sight of rows of pine-embowered tents and memorable camp setting.²²⁸

That summer, the "Wylie Way" hosted a record 10,541 guests. Indeed, after thirty-two years of business and hosting thousands of satisfied travelers to Yellowstone, the "Wylie Way" truly had become more than just camps and coaches. In evolving from a simple operation of portable tent camps to canvas village complexes, the "Wylie Way" had become more than just a tour of Yellowstone. It had grown to be an institution that promoted the informal spirit of the West and catered to the desires of a class of travelers who wanted a comfortable, educational, and enjoyable way to see Yellowstone in an economical manner.²²⁹

However, the delightful days of stagecoach travel through Yellowstone began to close with the introduction of the automobile in late 1915. The attempt to combine backfiring cars and anxious horses during the summer of 1916 had disastrous results. In 1917,

²²⁸ Miles, *The Yellowstone News*, 1.

²²⁹ Colonel Lloyd M. Brett, *Annual Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of Interior 1915*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915).

touring the park by stagecoach faded into the past as the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company auto stages or busses took over the road. In addition to the changeover from stagecoaches to automobiles, several of the touring concessions were consolidated, thus leaving one transportation company, one hotel company, and one camping company. This evolution of streamlining park operations affected nearly everyone including the “Wylie Way.” For the 1917 season, two other permanent camping companies, Shaw & Powell Camping Company and the Old Faithful Camping Company were consolidated with the “Wylie Way.” This newly organized and renamed Yellowstone Park Camping Company kept A.W. Miles at the helm and also maintained a number of the signature features of the old system such as the huge, blazing campfire in the center of the camp. In keeping with the ever popular catch phrase, the “Wylie Way” hence became known throughout the next decade as the “Camp Way.”

Just as the “Wylie Way” ceased in name to exist in Yellowstone, William Wallace Wylie came out of retirement. In 1916, the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad (LA & SL) (later absorbed by Union Pacific) decided to compete with the tourism monopoly of the Santa Fe railway on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon by developing a concession on the canyon’s North Rim in 1917.²³⁰ As this off-the-beaten-path location presented a bit of a challenge for the railroad, it turned to Yellowstone veteran W.W. Wylie. Wylie understood the rigors of developing and running a seasonal operation in a remote,

²³⁰ Benjamin Harrison established the Grand Canyon National Forest in 1893. In 1908, Theodore Roosevelt enacted the Antiquities Act and created Grand Canyon National Monument, which was administered by the Forest Service from 1908 until 1919. The Grand Canyon was upgraded to National Park status by President Wilson in 1919. For further information on the history of Grand Canyon National Park, see Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park*, Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000.

primitive area. In addition to setting up a camp at Bright Angel Point on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, the railroad also asked Wylie to set up and operate a camp at Zion National Monument.²³¹ The future prospects of these camps were enhanced by the promise of a five-year lease by the Department of Interior, and Wylie agreed to revive his camping system. At the same time that the “Wylie Way” in Yellowstone was being refashioned into the Yellowstone Park Camps Company and thus in name would soon cease to exist, the “Wylie Way” would experience renewal with its original founder in Utah and Arizona.

Wylie’s reputation preceded him. “To those who know Wylie’s camps nothing further need be said,” proclaimed George Wharton James,” and others may safely and satisfactorily take them on trust, for many thousands, in the years they were in Yellowstone learned of the ‘Wylie Way,’ and have ever since been enthusiastic boosters for its directing spirits.”²³² “While only a camp, the cottages are cosy [*sic*] and comfortable, the dining room attractive, and Mrs. Wylie’s genuine and motherly interest, combined with the excellent home-cooking that she supervises, at once gives to everyone that restful home-feeling that is so desirable when one is traveling.”²³³ According to James’s description, even though the locations of the camps had changed, the makeup of the Wylie operation remained much the same.

²³¹ At this time Zion was actually called Mukuntuweap National Monument. President Wilson changed its status to Zion National Monument in 1918 and in 1919 it became a National Park. See Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1999).

²³² George Wharton James, *Utah: The Land of Blossoming Valleys* (Boston: The Page Company, 1922), 185.

²³³ *Ibid.*

Backed by the LA & SL Railroad, Wylie set up thirty-seven cottages, a large social hall, and spacious kitchen and dining room buildings in Zion.²³⁴ The Grand Canyon camp, adjacent to Bright Angel Point, could accommodate forty persons in comfortable tent cottages and also had a central dining tent and a social room.²³⁵ Value and economy were still primary concerns and the camps at both locations offered daily lodging rates of only one-dollar and fifty cents. In comparison, a room without a bath at the El Escalante Hotel in Cedar City, Utah, (the terminus for both parks), cost two-dollars and fifty cents per day. Just as they had begun, the camps were family-run operations, with W.W., Mrs. Wylie, and son Clinton operating the Zion camp, and daughter Elizabeth and her husband Thomas McKee managing the Bright Angel camp at the Grand Canyon.²³⁶

Horace Albright, Yellowstone's first National Park Service superintendent, met Wylie on a visit to Zion in 1917. Albright knew of Wylie as the originator of the permanent camp system in Yellowstone, and he also knew of his "integrity, honesty, and knowledge of park standards."²³⁷ Albright believed that those qualities as well as Wylie's experience in Yellowstone would make him "a valuable contribution to solving concession problems."²³⁸ In the spring of 1917, everything looked promising to both Albright and Wylie. However, the war in Europe took a toll on the country's resources as well as tourism. The first summer in Zion, the Wylies served only three hundred guests. Wylie continued his operation there until 1922, when the railroad as well as the National Park

²³⁴ "Proposes to Establish Camp at Bright Angel," *Washington County News* (Utah), July 12, 1917.

²³⁵ United States Railroad Administration, *Zion National Monument, Utah* (Chicago: Rathbun-Grant-Heller Co., 1919); W.H. Murray, *Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks, Kaibab Forest North Rim of Grand Canyon* (Omaha: Union Pacific System, 1915).

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 243.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

Service decided that lodge style accommodations would be more desirable for the modern 1920s tourists. Log constructed lodges would eventually replace tent camps in nearly all of the national parks.²³⁹

When W.W. began the Bright Angel camp concession on the North Rim in 1917, the Grand Canyon was under the administration of the U.S. Forest Service as a national monument. Optimistically, Wylie expected to obtain a twenty-year contract for his camp once he had fulfilled the initial five-year lease. This long-term agreement would have made him the premier concessionaire on the North Rim, much like Fred Harvey on the South Rim. It was not to be. President Woodrow Wilson made the Grand Canyon a national park in 1919, and its administration fell to the National Park Service and the Department of Interior. The newly formed National Park Service was not duty bound to uphold any former promises made by the Forest Service to Wylie or any other concessionaire and it did not.

W.W. Wylie retired in 1924 at age 77, and daughter, Elizabeth McKee assumed full ownership of the Bright Angel facility. Even though the “Wylie Way” camp had operated as the principal concession at the North Rim from 1917 until 1927, Elizabeth experienced the same hindrance to the expansion of her operation in the Grand Canyon as did her father in Yellowstone; the issuance of *only* annual contracts from the National Park Service. Without a guarantee of a long term contract, Elizabeth was unable to plan for and acquire financing to expand and improve the Bright Angel tourist facilities and services. In 1927, the National Park Service decided that a more permanent concession at

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

the North Rim would be more appealing to the ever growing Grand Canyon tourism industry and accepted bids from other prospective concessionaires.²⁴⁰

Unbeknownst to Elizabeth and Thomas McKee, the National Park Service had a specific concessioner in mind, the Union Pacific Railroad and its subsidiary the Utah Parks Company. With the National Park Service contract requiring improvements that far outweighed the budget of the family-run “Wylie Way” Bright Angel Camp operation, Elizabeth and Thomas’s financial resources were no match for the multi-million dollar bid proposed by the Union Pacific Railroad. Without much choice, the McKees found that they had been “railroaded” into selling their camp for \$25,000.²⁴¹ Not surprisingly the new railroad-backed hotel company was awarded a twenty-year contract and immediately began construction on its North Rim Grand Canyon Lodge complex. While the Utah Parks Company worked on the lodge, Elizabeth and Thomas operated the Bright Angel camp through its final summer season. In October 1927, the last “Wylie Way” Camp, a western institution of national park tourism, became a part of history.

For more than thirty years the Wylie Camping Company, the originator of permanent camps in Yellowstone, offered visitors a whole host of experiences, observations, and impressions of “America’s Wonderland.” While touring, eating, and sleeping in the outdoors on a Wylie tent camping tour, old ruminations of wilderness gave way to visions of sublime scenery for guests that became romantic and spiritual. Each visitor had a separate set of ideas of what he or she thought Yellowstone was or should be. Many of those thoughts were based on a variety of personal, religious, economic, political, and

²⁴⁰ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 15.

²⁴¹ Betty Leavengood, *Grand Canyon Women, Lives Shaped by Landscape* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2004), 48.

cultural ideologies, which gave each voyager a different reason for coming to Yellowstone. Some sought escape and freedom from the anxiety and pressures of a world that had become terribly complex, while others sought spiritual and physical renewal. Many were charmed by the adventure of travel itself, while others came to explore Yellowstone's outdoor laboratory and become students of its weird and wondrous phenomena of nature. Whatever the rationale or motivation, a tour with the Wylie Camping Company for thousands of middle-class travelers to Yellowstone proved to be a personally rewarding, productive use of leisure time and a fulfilling, enjoyable life experience in respectable recreation.

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