

WONDER AND SPECTACLE IN THE WORLD'S FIRST NATIONAL PARK:
RAILROAD IMAGERY OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

By

Ellen Rae Kress

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

Of

Master of Arts

In

American Studies

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April 2011

© COPYRIGHT

by

Ellen Rae Kress

2011

All Rights Reserved

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Ellen Rae Kress

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citation, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to The Graduate School.

Dr. Robert Rydell

Approved for the Program in American Studies

Dr. David Cherry

Approved for the Division of Graduate Education

Dr. Carl Fox

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in part may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Ellen Rae Kress

April 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
Methods and Literature Review	3
Nationalism and Western Imagery	9
2. THE NORTHERN PACIFIC <i>WONDERLAND</i> SERIES.....	17
The Depiction of Gender, Race, Class, and Yellowstone's Resistance to Settlement and Commercialization	18
Yellowstone as a Cabinet of Curiosities: Questioning the Laws of Nature and Enlightenment Thought	28
3. THE UNION PACIFIC BEAR SERIES.....	39
Yellowstone's Bears as Humanlike Entertainers.....	40
Yellowstone National Park as Freak Show: Raising and Resolving Anxieties	44
Yellowstone as a Foil	49
4. CHANGING IDEAS ABOUT YELLOWSTONE.....	58
REFERENCES CITED	60
APPENDICES	67
APPENDIX A: Northern Pacific Brochures	68
APPENDIX B: Northern Pacific Guidebooks	70
APPENDIX C: Union Pacific Brochures	73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1-1. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, <i>Yellowstone National Park Burlington Route</i> . 1910. <www.davidrumsey.com >.....	14
1-2. Union Pacific Railroad Company, <i>Yellowstone The World's Greatest Spectacle Opens June 20th</i> . 1933. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.....	15
1-3. Thomas Moran, <i>Grand Canon of the Yellowstone</i> . 1872. National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.	16
1-4. William Henry Jackson, <i>Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone</i> . 1878. Library of Congress.....	16
2-1. Northern Pacific Railroad, <i>Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland</i> . 1883. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.	34
2-2. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, <i>Wonderland '99</i> . 1899. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.....	35
2-3. John Gast, <i>American Progress</i> . 1872. Library of Congress.....	36
2-4. Northern Pacific Railroad Company. <i>The Northern Pacific Railroad the Yellowstone Park Route</i> . 1893. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.	37
2-5. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, <i>Yellowstone National Park Burlington Route</i> . 1910. Inside detail. <www.davidrumsey.com >.....	38
3-1. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>Yellowstone the Show of Shows</i> . 1930. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.....	52
3-2. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>Don't Mean Maybe</i> . 1926. Inside detail. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.....	53
3-3. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>What Makes a Geyser "Geyse."</i> 1929. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.....	54

LIST OF FIGURES CONTINUED

Figure	Page
3-4. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>Bear Up Yellowstone Opens in June.</i> 1951. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.....	55
3-5. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>A Twin Attraction Sell Both Yellowstone and Grand Teton via U.P.</i> 1957. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.	56
3-6. Union Pacific Railroad Company. <i>They're Comin'! For Yellowstone's Opening.</i> 1950. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.	57

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about Yellowstone National Park, but little of it considers images as representations of the Park. In this study, I examine the imagery of two series of railroad advertisements for Yellowstone: the Northern Pacific Railroad's *Wonderland* campaign (1883-1910) and the Union Pacific Railroad's bear campaign (1923-1960). Despite the axiom "you can't judge a book by its cover," clearly the creators of these brochures think otherwise; they intend these images to convey the essence of Yellowstone. Both sets of railroad imagery refer to Yellowstone as an unusual place, a wonder, a curiosity, even a freak show. The Northern Pacific *Wonderland* series emphasizes the geothermal and geological features, while the Union Pacific series features bears. The Northern Pacific brochures are in and of themselves a collection of fragmented pieces of Yellowstone, like a cabinet of curiosities, a pre-modern collection kept by European social elites. By focusing on the unique and the singular, they question the laws of nature. They co-opt the metaphors of gender and race in order to portray Yellowstone as an island untouched by humans that resisted the march of Progress and Civilization. This idea of Yellowstone's separateness is what gives it commercial value and situates it squarely within American commercial culture. The Union Pacific bear images feature a theme of performance and entertainment. The Park and its bears and geysers are now tamed and serve to entertain tourists; Yellowstone is now a mass spectacle. The bears are entertainers, clowns, and freaks; they question the boundary between human and animal and thus cause anxiety. But traditional gender roles are upheld, and issues of class are largely avoided, which serve to calm the anxiety that was raised. In both railroad representations, Yellowstone National Park serves as a foil, a place modern tourists can visit to define themselves. These representations of Yellowstone chart a shift from elitism to consumer democracy; clearly ideas about Yellowstone National Park, and representations of it, have changed and continue to change with the times.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Yellowstone National Park, but little of it considers advertising imagery as a representation of the Park. Images of the Yellowstone can tell us about cultural attitudes towards, and myths about, the Park, and about how they change over time. These images are not straightforward reproductions of Yellowstone the place, but are representations of ideas about that place. In this study I examine imagery from two series of railroad advertisements for Yellowstone: the Northern Pacific Railroad's *Wonderland* campaign (1883-1910) (figure 1-1) and the Union Pacific Railroad's bear campaign (1923-1960) (figure 1-2). Between them, these series cover the total time period in which passenger trains served the Park.¹ Despite the axiom "you can't judge a book by its cover," clearly the creators of these brochures think otherwise; they intend these images to convey the essence of Yellowstone.

Yellowstone occupies a special place in the American imagination. It is on lists of places every American should visit, and it continually attracts controversy like a lightning rod. Yellowstone is nature yet it is not natural; its boiling geysers and mud pots seem to violate the very laws of nature. It is seen as a place that resisted cultivation and settlement; it seems to be a remnant of an untouched wilderness that is long disappeared elsewhere. The Yellowstone seems to unsettle visitors in a fascinating and riveting way. Tourists can visit it and have an exciting adventure in a primitive world, but then afterwards return to their modern comfortable homes. As a tourist destination, Yellowstone is a product of modernity, and it is an integrated part of modern American society rather than an area set apart.

I argue that the Northern Pacific *Wonderland* materials portray Yellowstone as an island of wild untouched nature surrounded by settled lands. Gender figures heavily in this

representation; female tourists gaze at masculine fetishized geological features of Yellowstone such as geysers and waterfalls, while ethereal female personifications of Civilization preside over settled lands surrounding the Park. In order to create an illusion of nature untouched by people, the images ignore the prior history of Native Americans in the Park. The brochures emphasize Yellowstone's unique and strange characteristics, portraying it as a collection of curiosities, a collection of exotic and unusual features. In addition, Yellowstone is a place for social elites to enjoy .

The Union Pacific bear brochures represent bears as humanized entertainers and performers, even side show freaks. Yellowstone Park in these images is a modern mass spectacle. The bears and the Park provide an opposite against which tourists can compare themselves and affirm their identity. Yet the bears maintain traditional gender and family roles, and relegate Native Americans to tiny bit parts, affirming middle class, white, male values. Differences between the earlier Northern Pacific and later Union Pacific imagery chart a changing course of beliefs about Yellowstone, from elitist to democratic, but in both time periods and sets of brochures, the Park is a foil for modern American civilization.

Today, ideas about Yellowstone have shifted to ecological ideas, where all of nature's original elements still interact as an integrated whole. Wolves were reintroduced in the 1990's to confirm this vision. However, as the railroad imagery clearly shows, Park enthusiasts at the end of the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century were not concerned with ecology, but with the Park's visually stunning geological wonders and curiosities and its entertainment value.

Methods and Literature Review

A dualism of text vs. image may be keeping historians from studying Yellowstone imagery. Most historians who mention railroad promotional imagery of Yellowstone only do so in order to use the art as a colorful illustration for their texts, not as a source of information in and of itself. In this study I demonstrate the wealth of information contained in these images and fill in a gap left by traditional historians. Historians seem to operate with an assumption that written texts are true history, while images are not and only play a secondary role. Alternatively, I assume that both imagery and written texts are representations of the past which have equal validity. In this study I compare imagery to written history and find that they express similar ideas more often than not.

If texts are not more important than images, nor is one kind of imagery more important than another. The Yellowstone railroad images are not “high art,” but they are just as important as other imagery of Yellowstone that is considered high art. Pierre Bourdieu writes that high art serves to differentiate social class and its designation is dependent upon a distance from functionality.² The railroad advertisements serve a definite function of selling a product and can never truly be considered high art although they may make appeals to upper class symbolism. The distinctions between high and low art can get muddled, however. Art historians study Thomas Moran’s (figure 1-3) and William Henry Jackson’s work (figure 1-4),³ which were respectively the first paintings and photographs of Yellowstone to reach the public. Presumably Moran’s and Jackson’s work qualifies as high art. But Moran’s and Jackson’s work had a function – it was used to attract wealthy investors to the railroads and to help convince Congress to create a national park.⁴ Thus Moran’s and Jackson’s work, confusingly, is high art

enough to warrant study but it is not high enough to be included in traditional art history courses.

Although early photographs and paintings of the West and of Yellowstone have received adequate analysis, graphic arts and advertisements have not. Stereographs, postcards, and other ephemera concerning Yellowstone Park have been neglected. In addition to the high/low art paradigm and the idea that images are not valid subjects of historical study, there is the problem that the identities of the artists who created many of the railroad illustrations are not readily known⁵, so it isn't easy to find biographical information. This is where the field of American Studies proves its worth. American Studies scholars study items of cultural production that have been ignored by other scholars for various reasons, and yet much can be learned from these items.

Several scholars have written at least peripherally about railroad promotional materials, foremost among them Alfred Runte. Runte's work, while chock full of useful historical details and reproductions of promotional material, contains only a couple of references in passing to details of actual images. These references are only in the captions, as if references to images are not important enough to be in the regular text. An example of this type of comment in a caption is a Southern Pacific image of a Native American in "Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad" that "evokes suggestions of the Indians' pride and endurance, even in the face of conquest and cultural loss".⁶ And, "the sedate, maiden-like figure pictured on an early-twentieth-century Union Pacific booklet...testifies to the changing attitudes towards women in American culture."⁷ Readers may be left wishing there were more detail about how Indian attitudes were evoked, or how attitudes about women were changing and how this

image relates to those attitudes. But with these remarks, Runte goes further than many historians seem willing to go.

In “Lure of the Parks,” Kirby Lambert presents a well-written synthesis of how railroads had the motivation and the means to promote national parks, and how they patronized artists and photographers. He discusses the role of the Park Service and the “See America First” campaign and notes themes in railroad posters, such as monumental landscapes and Native Americans. Similarly to Runte, he only allows himself a few brief, generalized comments about the images in their captions. For example, the ‘Before the Days of Railroad’ poster appeared in about 1930 to assure park visitors that their western adventure would be “neither too wild nor too unsafe.”⁸ Runte and Lambert both barely uncover the tip of the iceberg about what could be written about these materials.

Joshua Johns mentions railroad promotional materials in his thesis about the intimate involvement of railroads with national park promotion and formation. But he talks about them abstractly rather than discussing them specifically. He does discuss one painting each by Bierstadt and Moran in a detailed and specific manner. Bierstadt’s *Domes of the Yosemite* shows Yosemite as both sublime and ready to be civilized, while Moran’s *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* (figure 1-3) shows that Yellowstone’s landscape cannot be civilized.⁹ Johns asserts that railroad promotional materials for Yosemite and Yellowstone continued in this vein, depicting Yosemite as a now civilized wilderness where tourists could “witness the sublimity of nature without actually confronting it;”¹⁰ on the other hand, railroad promotional materials for Yellowstone emphasized Yellowstone’s curiosities, freaks of nature, and carnival side-show nature.¹¹ While I agree with Johns’ conclusions, he simply makes assertions and does not provide any evidence, visual or textual, to support his claim. Johns appears to be constrained by

a high art/low art paradigm, in which the paintings of Moran and Bierstadt, destined for elite audiences, are worthy of image-specific analysis, while advertisements, considered pop culture, are not worthy of analysis.

Runte, Lambert, and Johns have at least included the imagery in their work and initiated it into a discussion of national park history. I extend their work by studying the imagery as a historical text in its own right, which has its own message. Within the American Studies tradition, I take what might be called a neo-myth and symbol approach and argue that there were beliefs about Yellowstone Park that were shared by many Americans and that are embodied in the railroad brochures.

The myth and symbol approach is one of the earliest methodologies used by American Studies scholars, notably Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx. In his choice of title for *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Nash Smith takes from popular thought the idea of the innocent virgin as an analogy for wilderness. Nash explains how these myths and symbols influence how Americans act.

The terms “myth” and “symbol” occur so often in the following pages that the reader deserves some warning about them. I use the words to designate larger or smaller units of the same kind of thing, namely an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image. The myths and symbols with which I deal have the further characteristic of being collective representations rather than the work of a single mind. I do not mean to raise the question of whether such products of the imagination accurately reflect empirical fact. They exist on a different plane. But as I have tried to show, they sometimes exert a decided influence on practical affairs.¹²

Nash uses American literature to explain that Americans had certain ideas about Western lands, which in turn informed how they approached those lands. Leo Marx takes a similar approach in *The Machine and the Garden*. He examines two opposing ideals, nature and technology, and explores their relationship. He determines that in classic American literature, the pastoral ideal

is a fusion of the two ideals, a state where the contradictions between them are resolved and they are able to coexist.¹³ Marx and Nash Smith examine written representations; in a similar way I examine visual representations.

I argue that in the Northern Pacific representations of Yellowstone, a cabinet of curiosities is a fitting analogy, and in the Union Pacific representations, the best analogy is that of a freak show. I do not impose these analogies; rather, they emerge from the imagery and in some cases the words. I then take theories about cabinets of curiosities and freak shows and demonstrate how they make sense when applied to the railroad representations of Yellowstone. I also show that gender is an important symbol in these representations of Yellowstone. Women in the tourist brochures are not specific women, but symbols of something, usually Civilization, while the few men are not symbolic men but real men doing real things. Representations of gender in these brochures do not tell us about actual historical gender relations, but about abstractions of gender to other situations.

The myth and symbol approach has been criticized, notably by Bruce Kuklick, who argues that this approach is too universalizing.¹⁴ I attempt to keep his criticisms in mind. Since the 1970s American Studies has become more diverse as it has gained awareness of race, class, and gender issues.¹⁵ The railroads were run by white, elite, men, and they were the ones who created the railroad brochures. They aimed the advertisements at certain segments of the population whom they thought likely to purchase train tickets to visit Yellowstone National Park. Thus the ideas in the brochures do not represent how all Americans thought about the Park. For example, clearly Native Americans did not share then, and still do not share now, the idea of a national park where none of the resources are utilized, and the only function of the park is to be looked at.¹⁶ I am trying to find out what beliefs about Yellowstone are expressed by imagery

from that time period that still exists in the present day. I am not trying to make broad generalizations about American culture as a whole, but I am interested in discovering attitudes that were held specifically about one place, Yellowstone National Park.

Kuklick also criticizes the myth and symbol approach for being a sort of “Cartesian” approach that assumes that reality exists and that our minds map reality onto an interior representation.¹⁷ If this is what myth and symbol does, I agree with Kuklick. I am studying representations of the past. That is, the past is being re-presented. It is being mediated by the person doing the presenting. All we have are differing representations of ideas about what Yellowstone was or should be. Many of these representations use symbols to stand in for other concepts. Thus nature in Yellowstone, and female gender, become abstracted in order to say something about American civilization and progress.

I am interested in what position the brochures articulate in a debate about the role of nature in an age of modernization. As advertising, the brochures both reflect prevalent ideas of the time and try to influence these ideas. The best advertisements play on people’s deepest desires, and attempt to convince people that a certain product will fulfill those desires. Advertisements also try to create new desires in people for new products. In the case of the railroad brochures, one could argue that existing practices in Yellowstone Park led to representations of those practices in the brochures, and one could argue just as convincingly that the representations in the brochures led to a desire to have certain experiences in the Park and led to those practices taking place. Since it can be argued both ways, it makes the most sense to place the brochures in an on-going dialogue back and forth between the idea and the practice. I am interested in what stance the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railroad

brochures take in ongoing debates about Yellowstone National Park. Part of this debate is a debate over what role the West plays in America's destiny.

Nationalism and Western Imagery

In existing analyses of Western and Yellowstone images, nationalism is the concept most commonly discovered and commented upon. Peter Hales argues that early Western photographs embody the myth of the West as the potential of a free, unrestricted individual in an equally open landscape brimming with possibility. According to Hales, William Henry Jackson's photographs

[celebrate] two of the central myths of the American past – the free, heroic individual and the free, redemptive land that challenges, defines, and enlarges that individual, endowing his tasks with significance...this Romantic landscape represents a core myth of American civilization; the fabled ground upon which could be enacted American destiny¹⁸.

Thus Jackson's photographs embody a uniquely American vision of what the nation should be. For example, an 1869 photograph of *Devil's Gate Bridge*, a railroad bridge in a rough landscape, was popular and sold well. What we see in this photograph is "a vast, ancient, hostile region surmounted, reordered by man, yet not diminished by the process"¹⁹. Men have enacted their destiny in this landscape by building the railroad, and Jackson's photograph provides the evidence.

While Hales' book is an excellent historical work about the ideologies and tensions embodied in Jackson's photography, it is strangely genderless. Hales continuously uses "man" as a synonym for "human." The following quote exemplifies this: "Nature provided 'sermons in stones' etc.; to read her was to actualize her. This was the purpose of untamed mountains or vast deserts – to teach lessons about the infinite, about the grand plan of God for man and

nature, about the smallness of man in the face of that grandeur.”²⁰ Notice that Hales also refers to nature as female. While Hales has excellently characterized Jackson’s photographs as representative of ideology about the West in that time period, he has reproduced some of that ideology by unquestioningly repeating its gender bias and assumptions. For Hales, the Americans who are writing their destiny are implicitly assumed to be male, and women have no role. There are, in fact, women in some of Jackson’s photographs, but Hales doesn’t discuss them, or the significance of women’s inclusion in or exclusion from the photographs. Hales does a better job in discussing the role of Indians in Western imagery. In this thesis I have attempted to not repeat this kind of mistake and to pay close attention to the role of women and gender in Yellowstone imagery.

Similarly, Martha Sandweiss points out how photographs by railroad and expedition photographers portray the land as devoid of history, waiting for the American imprint.

For if the glorious future envisioned by these images was dependent on the technological conquest of distance and aridity, and the imagined capacity to mine the region’s natural resources, it was also dependent on a curiously blank notion of the region’s human history...lacking any sort of imagined or documented human dynamics. With such a blank slate to draw upon, it is no wonder that the American future could look so bright.²¹

In this vision, it was Americans’ nationalistic duty to civilize the land and make it produce bounty. The photographs create a future for America of unlimited possibility. But Sandweiss’ work, although an excellent history of the intertwining of photographic technology and the exploration of the West, is like Hales,’ strangely genderless. It seems that there is no room for discussions of gender in the paradigm of nationalism. This makes it particularly important in the case of the railroad brochures’ obviously gendered representations to look for other themes besides nationalism.

In another manifestation of nationalism, Euro-Americans felt that in their majestic Western landscapes, they had something that could compete with Europe's castles and cathedrals. Runte connects nationalism and the development of National Parks in terms of competition with Europe in *National Parks: the American Experience*. He writes of the anxiety Euro-Americans felt because they didn't have ancient culture and artifacts to compete with those of Europe. With the acquisition of Western lands, they lost no time declaring that they now possessed more magnificent scenery than Europe. Early publicists of Yosemite and Yellowstone proclaimed that Europe had no waterfalls that compared with Yosemite's and no geysers at all.²² Now, however,

For the first time in almost a century Americans argued with confidence that the United States had something of value in its own right to contribute to world culture. Although Europe's castles, ruins, and abbeys would never be eclipsed, the United States had "earth monuments" and giant redwoods that had stood long before the birth of Christ²³.

Thus it became important to preserve and protect these monumental Western landscapes, as they were national treasures and a part of America's very identity as separate from Europe.

Runte's hypothesis explains why much western imagery, including railroad imagery, emphasizes large geological features like rock towers or waterfalls, because they physically resemble Europe's large edifices like cathedrals and castles. In 1869,

Continuing on to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, [Cook] further discovered that here, too, "it required no stretch of the imagination to picture," deep within the recesses of the chasm, "fortresses, castles, watchtowers, and other ancient structures, of every conceivable shape." Similarly, near Yellowstone Lake the men later sighted other "objects of interest and wonder," including "stone monuments."²⁴

This passage shows how preconceived notions may have shaped explorers' accounts of what they found; because they were looking for large monumental objects to compete with Europe's, that is what they found.

Joan Zenzen's Ph.D. thesis "Promoting National Parks: Images of the West in the American Imagination" is the only study that includes some actual analysis of Northern Pacific Railroad imagery. She strongly argues that images of National Parks from Moran's 1872 painting *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* through material celebrating Yellowstone's centennial in 1972 embody the National Park Myth, which promotes nationalism. These images contain four themes which constitute the National Park Myth: panoramic landscapes, geology, references to the past and the present, and a nonthreatening relationship between humans and nature.²⁵ Zenzen demonstrates the presence of the four themes in Jackson's photographs, the Northern Pacific's *Wonderland* guidebooks, Dorothy Waugh's New Deal posters, Mission 66 visitor centers, and more recent environmentalist literature, showing that nationalism is still important in recent imagery of national parks.

Nationalism is an important myth and driving force that definitely exists in many Western and national park images, including railroad images. While acknowledging previous work demonstrating that these images depict Nationalism, I wish to explore further themes that exist in the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railroad images; for example, how Yellowstone Park is a foil for civilization and how gender is used to make this point.

In my analysis of the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railroad imagery about Yellowstone National Park, I find that Yellowstone is being presented as an opposite to American civilization. In the Northern Pacific imagery, both the analogy of the curiosity cabinet and the symbol of gender are used to depict Yellowstone as an island of wild nature surrounded

by civilization, which is mainly appreciated only by elites. In the Union Pacific imagery, the analogy of the freak show depicts Yellowstone as a modern mass spectacle, tamed and accessible to everyone. The bears cross the boundaries between human and animal. In both scenarios, in order to tame the anxiety that is raised, the history of Native Americans is erased, and traditional gender roles are upheld. In order for modern people to know who they are, and to calm their own anxiety about their modernity, there must be a repository that consists of everything they are not – Yellowstone National Park.

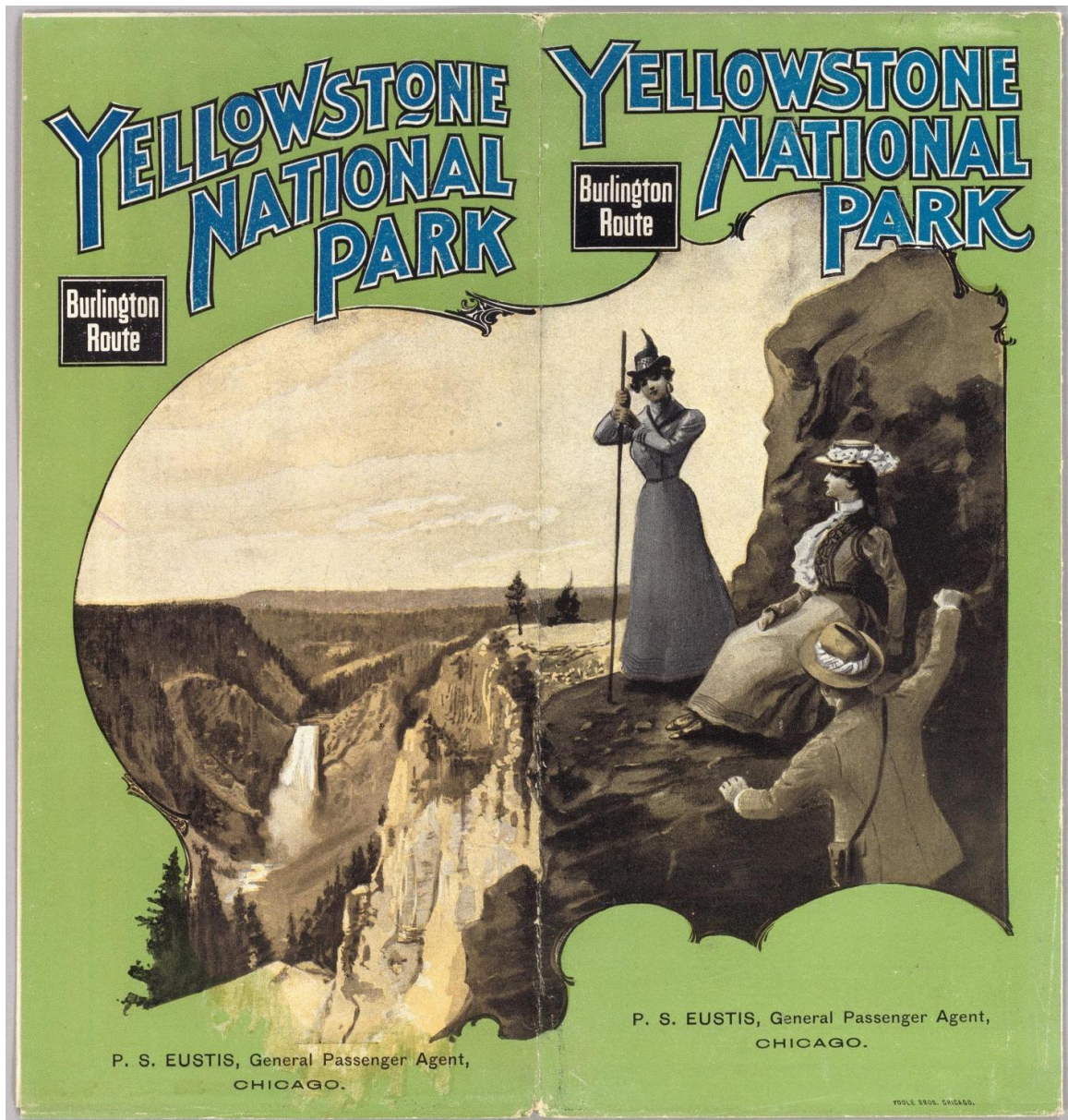


Figure 1-1. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Yellowstone National Park Burlington Route*. 1910. <www.davidrumsey.com>.

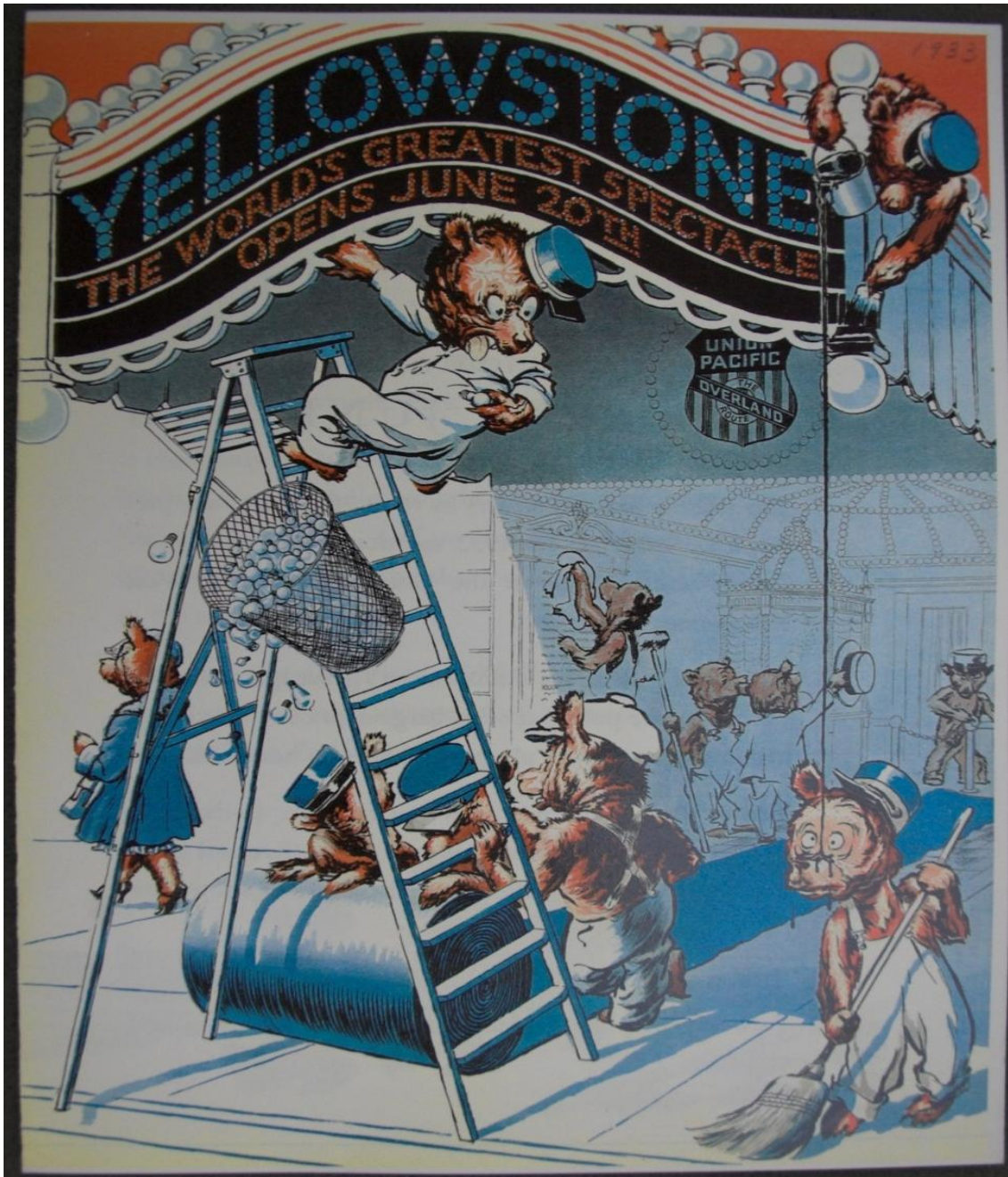


Figure 1-2. Union Pacific Railroad Company, *Yellowstone The World's Greatest Spectacle Opens June 20th*. 1933. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.



Figure 1-3. Thomas Moran, *Grand Canon of the Yellowstone*. 1872. Department of the Interior Museum.



Figure 1-4. William Henry Jackson, *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*. 1878. Library of Congress.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NORTHERN PACIFIC *WONDERLAND* SERIES

Railroads were a potent symbol of modernization in the late nineteenth century and played an integral part in the accessing and settling of the West.²⁶ The earliest national parks were each associated with railroads that built branch lines to them and promoted them. Yosemite, Crater Lake, Glacier, the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone were among the national parks most heavily promoted by railroads.²⁷ Thus railroad ephemera are particularly significant historical items for studying national parks since railroads, the embodiment of modernization, played such an important role in the formation of national parks.

Advertising was more necessary for national parks in the early days than it is now; visitation was low in the early days of the national parks and park supporters were worried about continued public and congressional support.²⁸ Advertising for national parks was in the early days almost entirely created by the railroads, as rail travel was the only practical way for tourists from the Eastern United States to reach the parks. All five railroads that served Yellowstone created promotional material about the Park;²⁹ however, the Northern Pacific's Wonderland campaign and the Union Pacific's bear campaign stand out for their originality and charm.

The Northern Pacific Railroad built the first rail line to the boundary of the Park, at Cinnabar, in 1883, and had a monopoly until the Union Pacific built the second line to the boundary of the Park, at West Yellowstone, in 1907.³⁰ The Northern Pacific published a series of guidebooks from 1885-1910 called the *Wonderland Series*,³¹ and a series of brochures, the first of which was *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland* in 1883 (figure 2-1). Thus the Northern Pacific paved the way, not only lobbying for national parks to be created, but also in

national park promotional materials. The brochures focus solely on Yellowstone, while the guidebooks place Yellowstone front and center but also include material on other parks, tourist attractions, and history of the Pacific Northwest. In this study I have used seven of the brochures and twenty one of the guidebooks and have focused mainly on the cover illustrations.

These railroad illustrations are more than just nostalgic colorful pictures. They hijack race, gender, and class and impose them upon nature in the quest to depict Yellowstone as a pristine, untouched wilderness that resisted American settlement and commercialization and had no apparent economic function. In the illustrations, Yellowstone questions the laws of nature and calls into question enlightenment thought. Its real value lies in its “to-be-looked-at-ness” and its capacity as a foil for American civilization.

The Depiction of Gender, Race, Class, and Yellowstone’s Resistance to Settlement and Commercialization

What is particularly striking about the covers of the Northern Pacific brochures and guidebooks is the preponderance of women in the cover illustrations. Of twenty two people on the covers, seventeen are women. Such an imbalanced representation of men and women indicates that gender is standing in for something else and the actual ratios of males to females in the Park in that time period is not the goal of the representation.

Some of the women are tourists, while others are symbolic. In the brochures, which focus on Yellowstone proper, there are ten tourist women and one symbolic woman; in the guidebooks, which include both Yellowstone and lands surrounding it, three women are tourists, and five women are symbolic. The symbolic women are in flowing robes, are often associated with symbols such as sheaves of wheat, and dreamily float over the landscape (figure 2-2). The

important distinction to note is that the symbolic women are associated with areas outside of Yellowstone Park, while the tourist women are associated with the Park itself.

The symbolic women in Northern Pacific imagery represent American Progress and Civilization. This is common in symbolist paintings of the time, for example John Gast's *American Progress* (figure 2-3). In this painting, a woman in white flowing robes, carrying a book, floats larger than life over the landscape, stringing telegraph wires as she goes. Down on the ground, real, non-symbolic men chase away Indians, bring covered wagons and till the land. The men are doing the actions, while the women represent the idealized meaning of the men's actions. One *Wonderland* brochure cover and three guidebook covers have symbolic women that look very similar to *American Progress* as they float over the landscape in flowing robes. In the context of lands along the Northern Pacific's route other than Yellowstone, this emphasis on Progress and Civilization makes sense, as the material in the guidebooks promotes land along the Northern Pacific's route. The railroad was attempting to lure settlers and investors to the region; thus it wanted to depict the land as already civilized. Articles in the booklets describe the region surrounding Yellowstone as agriculturally fertile and already possessing towns and schools.

If the symbolic women's primary role is to levitate over the landscape, the tourist women's role is to lounge in comfortable hotels or train cars. The tourist women are portrayed in the illustrations in leisure activities and exemplify the Victorian undervaluation of women's labor. They are very elegantly dressed, and are certainly upper class women who do not need to work. At the time, it was expensive and time-consuming to visit Yellowstone and only upper class Americans could afford to do it.³² These upper class women are able to enjoy such leisure only because they are paying other women to perform labor for them. They have probably

brought servants with them, and the hotels in the Park are staffed by lower class men and women, including blacks, but of course there are no servants or hotel workers depicted in the brochures. Thus one function of the tourist women is to make an analogy with Yellowstone Park: its value, too, lies in the perception that it is not performing a utilitarian function. It is not being mined, hunted, dammed, farmed, or logged; it is not being *used* for anything except to be looked at by upper class visitors. The landscapes that the women look out at show no evidence of human use, no dams or farmed fields or evidence of any human activity. Note the similarity to the definition of high art: high art does not perform a function. Thus the Yellowstone landscape is the domain of social elites and it is elite and set apart.

This representation of leisurely women recapitulates Victorian representations that Anne McClintock describes in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. McClintock writes that “in a century obsessed with women’s work, the idea of the idle woman was born.”³³ Middle and upper class woman are represented as freed from labor and become ornamental. McClintock argues that this typical bourgeois lady did not often exist, because most Victorian middle class women did have to perform domestic labor. The inherent value of this idealized woman lies in the fact that she does not have to work, obscuring the fact that most women did have to work. In the same way, the inherent value of Yellowstone is that it is not being used industrially.

The tourist ladies, besides lounging, serve a function of looking at Yellowstone Park. Alice of the *Alice’s Adventures in the New Wonderland* brochure has a pair of looking glasses in her hands. In a brochure from 1893 (figure 2-4), ladies sit on a verandah and look at the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone. In another brochure from 1910, ladies sit on a rocky cliff (figure 1-1)

and look at the Falls. The ladies are strategically positioned in unlikely vantage points in order to get the best view of the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone.

Five of the tourist women are looking at the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone, one looks at a rock tower, and one looks at a geyser. We cannot tell what the other four might be looking at. But the photographs on the inside of the brochures tell us what tourists to the Park are supposed to look at (figure 2-5). Of 45 photographs of Park features in five brochures, the top two subjects of the photographs are geysers or waterfalls. These, along with rock towers, are phallic, powerful, masculine features of the Park. The women are looking at features of the Park that are masculine and phallic - rock towers and orgasmic geysers and waterfalls. Other things in the Park that tourists look at today, like wildlife, wildflowers, or Yellowstone Lake, are not featured in these brochures. The brochures choose to feature geological features over everything else.

These geological features are part of what makes Yellowstone Park a unique natural landscape. Yellowstone sits on a large caldera which elevates it from the surrounding landscape, and is surrounded by rugged mountains. Yellowstone was one of the last areas in the lower forty-eight states to be explored because it is guarded by hard to navigate terrain and by long inhospitable winters. It was not fully explored until the Washburn Expedition of 1870. Thus it is the perfect symbol of nature that resisted exploration and settlement and progress. Once explorers finally got there, they found strange, scary and devilish geysers and mud pots that could boil a man alive should he fall in. By emphasizing masculine elements of Yellowstone, the brochures portray Yellowstone as a tough, strong, masculine landscape that resists American exploration, settlement, and manifest destiny.

Thus the elegant, female gendered tourists looking out on the primitive, masculine features of Yellowstone Park serve to create a contrast between their exaggerated femininity and Yellowstone's exaggerated masculinity. The symbolic women overseeing the lands surrounding Yellowstone highlight the contrast, showing that the surrounding lands have been settled and civilized. Gender is being used as an analogy to show that Yellowstone is a landscape set apart from other Western lands in America. It has resisted exploration and settlement; it is not a garden or a virgin land awaiting male Americans and trains to conquer it and to enact their destiny, as in nationalistic representations of the West.

Trains, those symbols of progress and nationalism, were never allowed in Yellowstone. While the rest of the West was tamed with locomotives, Yellowstone was kept free of them and of other visible signs of progress. Trains were built up to the border on all sides of the Park, but stopped there. Thus no photographs were taken by Jackson of the Park that resemble the *Devil's Gate*, in which the land has been heroically tamed. This is a clear instance where policy in Yellowstone followed ideals of what the park should be. The idea became the reality.

If the tourist women accent the wildness of Yellowstone National Park, so does the absence of Native Americans. In the Northern Pacific Railroad brochures there is not a single mention of Native Americans. Yet Native American tribes had been utilizing the resources of the Park for thousands of years before the arrival of Euro-Americans. Many tribes used it seasonally, and a group of the Shoshone known as the Sheepeaters used the area more permanently.³⁴ There were even some skirmishes between Indians and tourists early in the Park's history before the railroad was completed. In the Northern Pacific materials, Euro-Americans ignore Native American existence in the Yellowstone area, their use of its resources, and their resistance to white colonization.

In the 1883 brochure, the young traveler Alice tells us that “The hotel and the government roads and bridges are the only artificial things in the Park, everything else being in its natural condition – rude, stern and wild.”³⁵ In Congress when Yellowstone Park was being created, an argument for its creation was that it did not have utilizable resources,³⁶ which of course was not true as Native Americans had been utilizing its resources for thousands of years. The role that Native Americans played in the history and formation of the modern Park is erased from later representations of the Park, in order to constitute the Park as wild, untamed, and untouched by humans.

But Yellowstone National Park was colonized. Its original Native American inhabitants were conquered and their land was taken by the United States Government while they were relegated to marginal lands by oft-broken treaties. They were no longer allowed to hunt and gather in Yellowstone, or even to cross it to get to hunting and gathering areas.³⁷ The Northern Pacific brochures acknowledge colonization in a roundabout way comparing features of the Park to other places that Europeans had colonized or to stories Europeans had appropriated from colonized lands. Alice says that “The hot springs have formed a series of terraces which rise one above another with almost the regularity of the steps of the Great Pyramid which we visited, you remember, last year.”³⁸ And, “The cave of Aladdin, the island haunt of Monte Cristo, the very throne of Venus herself, might be here.”³⁹ Alice, as a well-to-do Briton, has visited areas over which Britain had imperial control, and now she is visiting an area that has been similarly subjugated.

The Obsidian Cliff in the Northern Pacific brochures is a fetish object which stands in for the absence of Native Americans in representations of the Park. The Obsidian Cliff is excessively praised in the brochures:

A drive of twelve miles brought us to the second wonder of the Wonderland, known as the Obsidian Cliffs. These are composed of glass!...perpendicular cliffs of solid glass – I cannot say transparent, but yet glistening like jet, and, with here and there, streaks of color. I forget whether you have ever seen the Giant's Causeway, in the north of Ireland, but the formation of the Obsidian Cliffs is very similar to that of the Causeway being a series of vertical columns, extending nearly a quarter of a mile and of imposing height.⁴⁰

I can attest that Obsidian Cliff looks just like any other normal cliff, and one would not notice it when driving past it today if it weren't for a sign. Even then, one is hard pressed to notice that it is composed of volcanic glass instead of basalt like most other cliffs in the Park. But it is overly emphasized in the brochures. The cliff was used by Native Americans as a source of material out of which to make arrowheads and spear points, and its obsidian was traded to far-away areas.⁴¹ Thus it references Native Americans and their use of resources in the Park. The enthusiastic adulation of the cliff's aesthetic qualities conceals the real significance of the cliff, its cache of an important resource. Obsidian Cliff becomes a fetish, an object that stands in for social relationships, in this case both the relationship of Native Americans to the natural world and the relationship between the races as whites drove Native Americans off their land. These relationships are obscured while all that remains is an obsession with Obsidian Cliff.

This legacy of ignoring Native Americans in conjunction with Yellowstone was not just confined to early railroad brochures; it has continued into the present. Nabokov and Loendorff explain that "until the present day the subject of American Indians and Yellowstone seems to have fallen into the cracks between those two broad areas of inquiry – between, that is, Culture and Nature."⁴² Unwilling to give Native Americans full human status, yet realizing on another level that they were human, Euro-Americans decided it would be easier to avoid the issue and erase them from Yellowstone. Nabokov and Loendorff continue

Appreciating the awkward place of Indians in Yellowstone National Park's history and ideology helps to clarify why any cultural theories that explained Indian absences from the park region might have been looked upon favorably, why funding or surveying the possible extent and intensity of early Indian occupancy or native uses of the park and environs was never plentiful, and why no full-time park cultural or archaeological advisors were appointed until the 1990s.⁴³

The situation now does not seem much improved since the 1990s. In the summer of 2010, I visited the visitor center at Mammoth Hot Springs. Euro-American history in the Park is depicted on the first floor. Native American history is inserted, as if an afterthought, on the second floor in the natural history exhibit. Native American artifacts are placed in whatever extra space there is in display cases of the Parks' wildlife, insinuating that Native Americans are more animal than human. Surely this kind of representation is not much improved over that of the Northern Pacific railroad brochures over 100 years ago.

If the brochures ignore Native Americans, the *Wonderland* guidebooks portray them as a people who are still exotic, yet whose traditions are on the way out as they become civilized on reservations. The 1894 guidebook is entitled "Indianland and Wonderland"⁴⁴ and two other cover illustrations feature an Indian brave.⁴⁵ At least seven articles over the years are specifically about Native Americans, for example "The Queniut Indians" in the 1906 edition⁴⁶ and "The Sepulchre of Lane Deer"⁴⁷ in the 1905 edition. The guidebooks emphasize that Native Americans are now peaceful residents of reservations who are adapting to white culture. But while Native Americans are mentioned in regards to other areas, they are never mentioned with regards to Yellowstone National Park. The guidebooks acknowledge that Native Americans exist, and tourist money might be made off them as well, just not in Yellowstone.

Thus issues of race are imposed upon nature in the visualization of the Park in order to ensure a class-specific experience of Yellowstone. In order for upper class white Americans to

have the experience of untouched nature, Native Americans who had been utilizing the Park's resources are erased from history. The bourgeois experience of the Park is ensured by the colonization of the Park. In Yellowstone, upper class whites enjoy a leisurely tourist experience in the Park, while Native Americans are deprived of their traditional livelihood.

In order for tourists to have this experience, railroads, hotels, tent camps and roads were built, stagecoach services were started, signs and trails were built in the geyser basins, souvenir and postcard industries sprang up, and advertising was created. The perception that the Park isn't being used for anything is shattered by the multimillion dollar industries that serve it. The Park is not being used for industrial resource extraction, but for industrial tourism. Chris Magoc states that

in fact the national park idea 'was in total agreement with a vision of the West as a fully developed, fully exploited region.' The vision supported by the Hayden Survey, as well as in the Jackson photographs and the avalanche of promotional material soon to be published by the Northern Pacific, was of "two Wests" – extractable resources, and sublime scenery – lying in sanguine juxtaposition, both awaiting human exploitation.⁴⁸

Yellowstone National Park is not set aside from the dominant capitalistic system; rather, it functions within that system. By disallowing extractive industries, its function is that of scenery. According to Magoc, Americans seem to feel that the existence of the sublime scenery of the Park, unblemished by industrial usage, serves to atone for the environmental destruction that takes place immediately adjacent. Thus the imagery's depiction of Yellowstone as having resisted progress, which includes capitalism and commercialism, is not entirely accurate.

As evidence of the commercialism of national parks, we need only look to their origins. Railroads were intimately involved in the formation and promotion of Western national parks, as they expected to profit handsomely. Noted national park scholar Alfred Runte has

thoroughly demonstrated this in *Trains of Discovery: Western Railroads and the National Parks*, as has Joshua Johns in his thesis *All Aboard: the Role of the Railroads in protecting, promoting, and selling Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks*. Runte explains that

According to popular tradition, the explorers who opened Yellowstone in 1870 conceived the national park idea while unraveling the mysteries of the region. But at best, ecology and altruism were afterthoughts of the Yellowstone Park campaign. From the outset, establishment of the park owed far more to the financier Jay Cooke and to officials of the Northern Pacific Railroad – all of whom, upon completion of the line, expected to profit from the territory as a great tourist resort.⁴⁹

Tourism was already an established industry before Yellowstone became a national park; people visited sights in the East such as Niagara Falls, and the transcontinental railroads were eager to replicate that success in Yellowstone. Not only did the Northern Pacific deserve credit for suggesting and promoting the idea of Yellowstone National Park, it, along with other railroads, actively promoted the formation of the National Park Service.⁵⁰

The creation of the National Parks was about exploiting the West, not about altruistically preserving nature; but Yellowstone's creation myth would have us believe otherwise. Lee Whittlesey and Paul Schullery discredit Yellowstone's creation myth, in which members of the 1870 Washburn Expedition, camped near what is now named National Park Mountain, altruistically invented the idea of a national park. In the myth, the men around the campfire wanted to preserve the area so that it didn't become overly commercialized like Niagara Falls. Whittlesey and Schullery point out that Nathaniel Pitt Langford, who propagated this myth, worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad, which was to profit immensely from the formation of Yellowstone Park. In their analysis, they can find no evidence that this campfire discussion took place; rather, Langford most likely created the myth later.⁵¹

In the Northern Pacific images, the themes of race, gender, and class are imposed upon nature and are abstracted in order to represent something else – Yellowstone’s resistance to American civilization and progress. Women in these images are symbols of American Progress and Civilization, or they are tourists accentuating Yellowstone’s lack of physical use-value and its masculine nature. Masculine gendered Yellowstone is a symbol of resistance to civilization and progress. These symbols and abstractions obscure the fact that Yellowstone is a fully integrated and functioning part of the commercial system of the United States.

Yellowstone as a Cabinet of Curiosities:
Questioning the Laws of Nature and Enlightenment Thought

The first Northern Pacific brochure, *Alice’s Adventures in the New Wonderland* (Figure 2-1) directly refers to Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. The cover has a picture of Alice, and the text of the brochure is a letter that Alice, a little more grown up than she was in the novel and now a seasoned traveler, has written to her cousin describing her trip to Yellowstone. The reference to a story of a traveler in a strange land, and the possibility of capitalizing on the success of Carroll’s beloved story, was too much to resist for the brochures’ creators.

The Yellowstone area was referred to as an area of wonders before *Alice in Wonderland* was written in 1863 or the Park was created in 1872. In accounts as early as 1803, the Yellowstone area is “filled with wonders”, a “wonderworld” in 1843, and “wonderful.”⁵² According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a wonder is “something that causes astonishment; a marvelous specimen; an extraordinary natural occurrence; [something] miraculous, magic, magical.”⁵³ A similar word used in both the brochures and in *Alice in Wonderland* is “curiosity.” In the brochures, Alice gushes that “the Park, let me tell you, is an extensive area *literally*

crowded with natural curiosities of the most wonderful character.”⁵⁴ According to the *OED*, a curiosity is “a thing that [is] curious or interesting from novelty or strangeness; any object valued as curious, rare, or strange.”⁵⁵ The hydrologic features of the Park are repeatedly described in the brochures as devilish, horrible, primitive, and wonderful. Both *Alice in Wonderland* and the Northern Pacific’s *Wonderland* series drew on the pre-existing cultural idea of the “wonder.” There was in this time period of the 19th century a collective Euro-American fascination with wonders and curiosities.

Stephen Greenblatt links the word “wonder” to exploration and colonization in his book about representations of the New World, *Marvelous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World*. In early accounts of encounters with native, Europeans experienced “revulsion” and “ravishment” simultaneously.⁵⁶ Greenblatt writes that “this rift, this cracking apart of contextual understanding in an elusive and ambiguous experience of wonder, is a central recurring feature in the early discourse of the New World.”⁵⁷ That is, the experience of wonder is so powerful that it seems to stand apart from what caused it and the context it was experienced in. Further, “when we wonder, we do not yet know if we love or hate the object at which we are marveling; we do not know if we should embrace it or flee from it.”⁵⁸ And “by definition, wonder is an instinctive recognition of difference...in the face of the new.”⁵⁹ Wonder is what we feel when we see something totally alien and other from ourselves, as when the Europeans who considered themselves civilized encountered people who they considered to be savages. The language of wonder is a language of discovery and colonization.

Greenblatt is writing of New World explorer accounts from the 1500s, and I am looking at accounts of Yellowstone 300 years later. This reversion to the language of discovery occurred because Yellowstone was one of the last areas in the lower forty-eight states to be discovered

and explored. And by using the word wonder, the brochures tell would-be tourists that they, too, can be explorers and can see the Yellowstone region as if for the first time.

The constant use of the words “wonder” and “curiosity” in the Northern Pacific brochures are reminiscent of cabinets of curiosities, known as *Wunderkammern*, collections held by elite Europeans in the 1600s to the 1800s. Like any collection, cabinets were meant to recapitulate the world in a smaller version and all in one place, and all in the possession of one person. What united the items in the collections was their rarity or strangeness. Cabinets of curiosities might contain art, or antiquities, or natural objects. They were the precursors of museums.⁶⁰

Indeed the railroad brochures with their collections of photographs are like a cabinet of curiosities on paper – a miniature collection that the tourist or would-be tourist can take home. Inside the brochures, a collection of photographs of Park features is montaged with descriptions of routes and amenities in the Park. What unites these photographs as a collection is their strangeness and exoticism. But it is only exotic geological features that have been chosen. Native Americans are not included in the collection, nor are exotic flora and fauna. The photographs take certain features of the Park and isolate them from their natural surroundings; they become fragmented, just as if they were in a physical collection. In addition, particular objects are chosen over other objects and eventually come to stand in for the whole of the Park. As we know, Old Faithful now is a stand-in for the entire Park. Early Park admirers were not interested in relationships and webs of ecosystems like we are now; they were interested in individual fragments. In the early days of the Park, before the Army took over, it was common for tourists to break off pieces of the geysers for souvenirs.⁶¹ There are photographs that show

certain geysers before and after and show the extent of the damage that was done. The Victorian era was an era of collecting.

Wunkerkammern stressed the singular and the unusual, as do the Northern Pacific brochures. In *Collectors and Curiosities*, Krzysztof Pomian explains that

If nature is said to be governed always and everywhere by the same laws, then logically it should be reflected in the common, the repetitive and the reproducible, but if, on the other hand, no laws can be seen at work in nature, rare things alone are seen to be capable of representing nature properly.⁶²

By this logic, Yellowstone is portrayed in the brochures so unusual that it seems to break the rules of nature and to somehow not belong in the same category as other natural places and not be explainable by the same laws. It contains rarities not often seen elsewhere or in such great numbers. Cabinets of curiosity are seen by Pomian as pre-scientific, or “prior to the scientific revolution.”⁶³ Yet their existence overlapped with the beginnings of the age of science. And Yellowstone’s discovery certainly overlapped with the age of modern science. Thus, I argue that rather than being pre-scientific, cabinets of curiosity are anti-scientific, and by analogy, Yellowstone is being depicted this way too.

In this way cabinets of curiosity are subversive, as they question the so-called “natural order of things.” Laws of nature were earlier thought to have been ordained by God, for example by Descartes and Newton. Later, as Enlightenment thinking spread, they became based on empiricism, or what was observable.⁶⁴ By emphasizing unusual specimens that are not usually observed, the laws are brought into question. By questioning laws of nature, cabinets of curiosity and Northern Pacific representations of Yellowstone are also questioning scientific reasoning and the very basis of Enlightenment thought, upon which American civilization and progress was built.

Laws of nature give people a sense of security because nature becomes predictable. But when seemingly universal laws are questioned, the sense of security is disrupted and anxiety is caused. Hence the popularity of Old Faithful: it makes people feel comfortable because they can predict it. The emphasis on the strange and rare sights in depictions of Yellowstone plays the role of questioning laws of nature and of causing anxiety. Tourists travel to Yellowstone to seek out the unusual and to see things they have never seen before, things which amaze them and seem to defy the normal rules. Tourists seek excitement, but anxiety is caused as well.

But in the imagery, Yellowstone's elite visitors can calm their anxiety by riding in the finest trains and coaches and staying in the finest hotels, and assuring themselves that the world is as it should be, in that elites still hold privileges that other classes don't, like visiting Yellowstone. Yellowstone's similarity to a cabinet of curiosities reinforces Yellowstone as the domain of social elites. Cabinets of curiosities were held by social elites, as the items tended to be rare and expensive, or the items could only be acquired by travel to distant lands. According to Pomian, the items in cabinets had no physical use. They were semiophores, objects which have meaning but no use-value.⁶⁵ Elite people are semiophores also.⁶⁶ People with meaning but no use tend to collect objects with meaning but no use. In the earliest days Yellowstone was the playground of elites.⁶⁷

Thus the Northern Pacific *Wonderland* materials are not transparent windows onto Yellowstone Park; rather, they represent ideology that elite, white, male Americans at the time believed about the Yellowstone. They are in and of themselves a collection of fragmented pieces of Yellowstone, like a cabinet of curiosities, a pre-modern collection kept by European social elites. By focusing on the unique and the singular, they question the laws of nature and

cause anxiety. Yellowstone's very separateness, the fact that it is not used by extractive industries, is what gives it value and signifies it as a preserve for elites.

However, in the next chapter we will see that Yellowstone was not to remain the domain of elites for long. Soon, more and more tourists would descend on the Park in automobiles, and this change is reflected in the Union Pacific bear imagery. An accompanying shift occurs from curiosity and wonder to entertainment and spectacle.



Figure 2-1. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*. 1883. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.



Figure 2-2. Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Wonderland '99*. 1899. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.



Figure 2-3. John Gast, *American Progress*. 1872. Library of Congress.



Figure 2-4. Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *The Northern Pacific Railroad the Yellowstone Park Route*. 1893. Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Renne Library.

CHAPTER THREE: THE UNION PACIFIC BEAR SERIES

The Union Pacific Railroad during the heyday of the railroads in the 1920s brought more tourists to Yellowstone Park than any other railroad via West Yellowstone.⁶⁸ The railroad produced a series of guidebooks called *Geyserland*. It also produced a series of advertisements from 1923-1960 that was directed at travel agents and featured cartoon bears; 92 are known to have survived until the present day.⁶⁹ The cute cuddly bears in these illustrations populate and run the Park, serve visitors, and are tourists themselves (figure 3-1). The Union Pacific bear imagery is not as well known as the Northern Pacific imagery and has only been reproduced in two places, Thornton Waite's *Yellowstone By Train* and a set of note cards sold by The Yellowstone Association.

Whereas in the Northern Pacific vision, Yellowstone's function is to remain wild and resist progress and civilization, in the Union Pacific world, the Park is tamed and its function is to entertain us. It is now a democratic spectacle for the masses, no longer just for elites. But Yellowstone still retains the function of questioning "natural" boundaries and laws of nature in order to induce anxiety, and the brochures uphold traditional gender roles and eliminate class concerns to calm the anxieties that have been raised. While the Northern Pacific brochures contain nationalism, the Union Pacific brochures have shed references to nationalism. They contain no women in flowing robes floating over the landscape. Instead their focus is on entertainment.

Yellowstone's Bears as Humanlike Entertainers

In the Union Pacific brochures, Yellowstone's bears are anthropomorphized. They wear spectacles, smoke cigars, and engage in human activities like playing baseball, going to court, watching TV, having picnics, making movies, and eating in cafes. They have nuclear families and wear clothing that signifies their gender roles. They become individuals with different personalities. In the absence of humans in the wilderness of the Park, bears seem to have become human replacements.

These brochures are part of a long tradition of bear anthropomorphization by Americans. Paul Shephard and Barry Sanders note that this practice goes back to the Paleolithic era; cultures all over the northern part of the globe revered the Great Bear constellation around which the heavens revolved. They believed that the bear had power over the seasons and the cycle of life and death. When Europeans reached North America, they found that they shared their belief in the Great Bear constellation with Native Americans.⁷⁰ In the 20th century, Teddy Bears, Yogi Bear, Smokey Bear, and Winnie the Pooh were popular humanized bears. The teddy bear predated the brochures (1903), but the brochures predated Yogi Bear (1958), Smokey Bear (1944) and Winnie the Pooh (1924). It seems likely that the creators of the Union Pacific bear series wanted to capitalize on the teddy bear craze at the beginning of the 20th century.⁷¹

Like teddy bears, the Union Pacific bears are cute and are here to make humans happy. The most common theme in the Union Pacific bear illustrations is a theme of performance and entertainment. Of the 92 bear illustrations, 37 depict the bears being either mischievous or inept, like clowns. Twenty-two of the illustrations have a theme of performance; for example,

films, circuses, parades, or beauty pageants. The bears are presented as happily performing for their human visitors.

This phenomenon of entertaining bears is not limited to railroad advertisements; in a similar vein, the Yogi Bear cartoons use Yogi and other bears as entertainment. In the first *Yogi Bear Show* episode in 1961, there is a fence around the Park and Yogi devises various schemes to “escape,” but he is repeatedly foiled by Mr. Ranger, until finally he escapes just when hunting season starts and then he wants to get back inside the Park and finds himself locked out.⁷² This is a strange representation of Yellowstone as there is of course no fence around it and bears are free to come and go as they please. Similarly, at least five of the brochures show Yellowstone with a fence, and one of these even shows the bears being let out of a jail cell in which they were hibernating.⁷³ The fences seem to indicate that the Park is like a zoo. American animal entertainment has often involved captive animals.

Yellowstone in fact had two zoos in the early days, one run by a concessioner on Dot Island in Yellowstone Lake and one run by rangers at Mammoth.⁷⁴ In addition to the zoo, bison were kept in pens near the road so that visitors would have a better chance of seeing them up close. Horace Albright, an early Park superintendent, kept pet bears chained outside his house in Mammoth, and many rangers had pet bears as well. The zoo animals were captured from the Park in the spring, then released in the fall. Passengers were taken via boat to the private zoo on Dot Island; it was eventually shut down because the animals were in horrible shape, starving, mangy, and standing in feces. They were fed garbage from the hotels and elk could be seen eating meat scraps. The public objected, not to the fact that a zoo existed in the Park, but to the terrible treatment of the animals. At that point in Yellowstone’s history, unlike today, a zoo was seen as consistent with the Park’s mission.

Alice Wondrak Biel has written about the phenomenon of zoos in Yellowstone in *Do*

(Not) Feed the Bears. She explains:

In part, the zoo was the product of the NPS's need to build a strong fan base. Albright realized that as long as their destiny rested in the hands of a politician entity (Congress), the national parks would have to build a public constituency... Mather and Albright...took as their primary task the maximization of tourist visits and satisfaction with the national parks and accomplished it by constantly improving accessibility, accommodations, and visitor entertainment.⁷⁵

Albright believed that Yellowstone had to compete with other forms of entertainment to which tourists could travel in order to survive. The temptation to at least partially turn it into a zoo was too great to resist.

Horace Albright believed that visitors wanted to be entertained and that the animals should be made more visible. The animals in their natural habitats, engaging in their normal behaviors, were apparently not entertaining enough, so they were put in zoos, or fed, or attracted closer to roads in large numbers with food. Gregg Mitman in his book *Reel Nature* notes that the same occurred in films. Early films such as *Roosevelt in Africa* (1910), which utilized only footage shot in the wild in Africa, were apparently not exciting enough and didn't do well at the box office, while *Hunting Big Game in Africa* (1910) which was shot in a Chicago studio and featured a fake lion-hunting scene, was a box office hit. It seems likely that Albright got his idea that wildlife needs to be entertaining at least partly from the movies. Albright wrote that black bears are "the clowns of the forest."⁷⁶ Park administrators thought bears behaving as they do in the wild were not exciting enough and had to be made more exciting by feeding them. The creators of the brochures add to this process; bears being fed by the roadside are not exciting enough, and have to become circus performers in order to hold visitors' attention.

Besides the zoos, bears did perform in the Park. Black bears along roadsides had learned to beg for food from tourists in cars (figure 3-2) and grizzly bears performed in nightly theatrical shows where they were fed food scraps from the hotels.

Yellowstone Park, more than any other place in America, became known nationwide as a place where one could go to interact with bears.⁷⁷ It was part of the essence of Yellowstone. Interacting with bears was not totally benign, however. Every year hundreds of injuries and incidents of property damage were reported. Eventually the Park Service decided that bear feeding was not good for either bears or humans. Dump feeding was ended in 1931, but roadside begging persisted into the 1950s. Bears as performers eventually came to be seen as a less desirable feature of the Park.

The brochures also perpetuate the idea of geysers as entertainers (figure 3-3). Old Faithful is the most common theme, appearing in 62% of the brochures, usually erupting in the background next to Old Faithful Lodge as a symbol of Yellowstone. In at least two of the brochures, the bears are depicted as engineers who run the geysers using steam engines, and who monitor the performance with instruments to make sure it is going smoothly.⁷⁸ The geysers as well as the bears have become tamed; geysers are no longer devilish and scary like they were in the Northern Pacific vision, but now they can be monitored and controlled. Like the roadside begging bears, Old Faithful became such a popular attraction because it could be depended on to perform regularly.

A cover from 1930 is titled “Yellowstone: the show of shows” (figure 3-1). It features side show circus tents with pictures of Old Faithful, the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone, and Mammoth Terrace as side show attractions. A barker announces the attractions, while a sheriff

bear catches a teenage bear sneaking into one of the tents. Thus in the Union Pacific bear series, both geysers and bears have become tamed and serve to entertain tourists.

Yellowstone National Park as Freak Show: Raising and Resolving Anxieties

The performances of the bears, and especially the images with an explicit circus or side show theme, have led me to use the analogy of the freak show to explain how Yellowstone was viewed in the first half of the 20th century. For example, a 1951 Union Pacific brochure (figure 3-4) depicts on its gaudily colored cover bears performing in a circus. The title proclaims *Bear Up – Yellowstone Opens in June*. A strong man bear lifts up another, both dressed in leopard skins. Around them, watching in a circle, are a sultan, a fat lady, a ballerina, and a clown. In the background, there are more clowns, a tightrope walker, and an Indian. The sultan and the Indian are exotic and non-white, thus they are freaks. The fat lady doesn't fit feminine standards of beauty and is thus a freak.

Both freak shows and the Union Pacific railroad brochures blurred the line between animal and human. Freak shows made humans seem more like animals; the Union Pacific brochures make animals seem more human. Freak shows were concerned with race, and so, I believe, are the brochures.

P.T. Barnum's "What Is It?" exhibit was a racially charged exhibit that made humans seem like animals. In this exhibit, a black person was dressed in animal skins and the whole point of the exhibit was to question whether he was human or an animal. He was presented as a "missing link" between mankind and the apes. James Cook points out that

By positioning his dark-skinned Museum character as "nondescript" rather than "Negro," Barnum provided white mid-century New Yorkers with an arena in

which to talk openly about black people, often in brutally dehumanizing ways...without even acknowledging *who*, exactly, they were talking about.⁷⁹

Barnum had found the perfect formula to inflame public curiosity: courting racial controversy. He realized that many of the anxieties of that time period centered on race, and that people had great curiosity about this subject. During a period of world colonization by Europeans, people wanted to determine their place in a world that now included all the continents and races.

While Barnum made dark-skinned humans seem like animals, the brochures make animals seem like dark-skinned humans. The Union Pacific bears seem to be a replacement for Native Americans, the real humans who used to live in the Yellowstone area. Miriam Forman-Brunell articulates a similar thought about the teddy bear: “The domestication of the dark-skinned bear (and the connotation of its possession by another, as suggested by ‘Teddy’s Bear’) manifested turn-of-the-century notions of white racial supremacy over inferior ‘others.’”⁸⁰

There are three Indian bears in the Union Pacific materials, and they are entertainers. Two of the 92 brochures include bears dressed as Indians⁸¹ who wear feather headdresses. In one image where the bears are having a parade with floats that represent features of Yellowstone, a couple of Native American bears are responsible for pouring water to make a representation of the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone. They are clownish, like many of the bears, botching the job. The other Indian bear is in the circus image (figure 3-4). Like bears, the primary purpose of Native Americans is now to entertain white tourists.

While the presence of Native Americans was erased from Yellowstone, they were and still are present in areas adjacent to the Park. They sometimes perform for tourists. There was even a proposal to exhibit Native Americans at the zoo on Dot Island, although the idea never

came to fruition.⁸² White Americans were eager to see exotic Native Americans perform in the early 20th century, as exemplified by Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

White Americans were eager to see any kind of exotic performance in this time period. Rosemarie Thomson's book *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* discusses exhibitions of human bodies considered freakish, such as conjoined twins, dwarfs, and bearded ladies. But if the word "landscape" is substituted for the word "body," the quotations make sense for Yellowstone's freakish landscape. For example,

History bears ample witness to this profound disquiet stirred in the human soul by bodies that stray from what is typical or predictable. Such troubled fascination with the different body has occasioned enduring cultural icons that range from the cyclopic Polyphemus and the gigantic Goliath to the werewolves and the seven adorable little dwarfs...What seems clearest in all this, however, is that the extraordinary body is fundamental to the narratives by which we make sense of ourselves and our world.⁸³

As at a freak show, early visitors to Yellowstone did feel attraction and revulsion for the area's strange geysers, mud pots, and rock formations in the canyons. Park features are even named after freaks, like Giantess Geyser. If the analogy of a freak show holds for Yellowstone, then Yellowstone is part of how American culture makes sense of itself. Just as freakish bodies seem to attract anxiety, so too does Yellowstone Park. Anxieties about changing race and gender roles attached themselves to the Park.

In addition, Thompson writes about the spectacle of freak shows:

Especially in Victorian America, the exhibition of freaks exploded into a public ritual that bonded a sundering polity together in the collective act of looking. In a turbulent era of social and material change, the spectacle of the ordinary body stimulated curiosity, ignited speculation, provoked titillation, furnished novelty, filled coffers, confirmed commonality, and certified national identity.⁸⁴

I argue that in a similar way, travel to Yellowstone to see freaks of nature is a ritual and a spectacle. In addition, the spectacle is democratic. Circuses and sideshows are for the masses.

In the time period that the bear brochures were created, the railroads faced increasing competition from the private automobile as increasing numbers of middle class Americans owned their own cars and were able to visit the Park on their own. Yellowstone was no longer too expensive for anyone but elite Americans to visit, and had become a modern mass spectacle.

A Union Pacific image from 1957 (figure 3-5) confirms the idea of Yellowstone as a spectacle. Bears are shown painting Yellowstone as if it were a stage set. Some bears paint clouds, others paint erupting geysers, and others paint mountains. In another 1924 brochure, two bears paint the walls of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.⁸⁵ Other images show the bears getting the Park ready for visitors by putting up signs, trimming tree branches, and stocking the lakes with fish. The brochures' creators are aware that they are creating a spectacle to be consumed. The brochures frequently use words such as attraction, marvel, circus, sideshow, and spectacle.

The bears in this spectacle have changed drastically from ferocious, dangerous creatures that must be killed at all costs into friendly cuddly creatures that are here to entertain tourists. Donna Varga charts this fascinating cultural transformation in "Teddy's Bear and the Sociocultural Transfiguration of Savage Beasts Into Innocent Children." Throughout the 19th century, "Conquering the wild was considered necessary by whites for their achievement of supremacy over other races, living beings, and nature itself,"⁸⁶ and "brutal control over bears was necessary for the good of white humankind."⁸⁷ Yet, the teddy bear became "symbolic of childlike innocence."⁸⁸ Similarly, the Union Pacific bears are not ferocious at all but are friendly and are here to entertain us. The same transformation has happened to Native Americans. Thus white Americans still exercise control over both bears and Native Americans, but it is

transformed into a more benign-seeming form of control. In this way, tourists can go see exotic scary animals, but paradoxically they can visit safely because the animals are in a national park. The same is true for freak shows; a half-man, half-animal would be scary if it were seen wandering the streets at will, but confined to a freak show, it is safe to marvel at.

In this way, the taming of bears and Native Americans help determine Euro-American visitors' identity, by stirring up anxiety, then calming it. Anxiety, and thus curiosity, is inflamed by crossing the line between animal and human, as in a freak show. But at the same time the anxiety is calmed by transforming the bears from ferocious, dangerous creatures into friendly, cuddly, and safe creatures. And, as the bears resemble dark-skinned humans, Native Americans are likewise transformed from a threat that must be removed at all costs into tamed, acculturated creatures who have accepted white ways. I believe this creating of anxiety, then mitigating it, is the mechanism that Thomson is referring to whereby freak shows affirm American identity.

Not only are they cute entertainers, the bears recapitulate traditional gender roles, which also serves to make them safe and to calm anxiety. The earliest bears do not have a gender, but the first female bear with a dress appeared in 1933,⁸⁹ and female bears appeared with increasing frequency after that. In the 1950 advertisement "They're Comin'" (figure 3-6), traditional nuclear family values are upheld, as the female bears do the cleaning while the male bears watch TV. In the brochures, male bears are the ones who get the Park ready for its human visitors, or who monitor the geysers; that is, male bears do the work of consequence. But in the wild, bears are not social; they tend to establish territories and to avoid each other.⁹⁰ Bears don't have nuclear families; only the females raise the cubs without help from the males.⁹¹ The female bears do all of the work. Thus, the gendered bears in these brochures are not being

used to represent how real male and female bears behave in the wild, but rather they portray traditional human ideals of gender.

Also to avoid anxiety, the brochures avoid issues of class difference. The bears are mostly middle class, and they appear to be on relatively equal footing. The tourist bears are on vacation, implying that they normally work most of the time. There don't appear to be any elite upper class bears, or if there are, it's hard to tell them apart from the middle class ones. The only signs of lower class are the side show performers, or an occasional waitress serving bear visitors to the Park.

Thus by portraying bears as performers in a freak show, the Union Pacific brochures capitalize on the popularity of freak shows in a time of social change and anxiety. They depict the bears as part animal, part human, just like freak show entertainers, in order to use Americans' anxiety about changing roles of the races and gender during a period of colonization. In fact the bears are stand-ins for Native Americans. The brochures calm this anxiety, though, by transforming bears from ferocious and dangerous creatures into cute and cuddly ones, just as Native Americans had been "tamed" on reservations. They also calm anxiety by portraying the bears in very traditional gender roles and by glossing over issues of class.

Yellowstone as a Foil

Dean MacCannell makes another argument about a ritual used to confirm Americans' identity in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. He argues that tourism is a ritual that modern people do in order to confirm their identity. "Self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature."⁹² Modern people go to see the "authentic" Other, which is

the opposite of themselves. Modern people are alienated by their work and by society, so they go to see authentic, exotic people, who are not yet alienated from their work.

MacCannell's argument can be extended to nature tourism so that modern people believe themselves to be alienated from nature, and thus go to see authentic, pre-modern nature:

Modern museums and parks are anti-historical and un-natural...the staging of otherness and the organization of disparate elements in collections and representations into a single design of modern making, with the modern world flowing past its designated attractions, renders history, nature and traditional societies only aspects of the structural differentiation of the modern world.⁹³

That is, by creating national parks as "separate" areas of nature untouched by modern humans, as remnants of lost authentic nature, Americans have created a place we can go to visit to create an experience of closeness to nature that we don't have in our everyday lives. But these enclaves of pre-modern sensitivity are fully incorporated elements of modern social systems, although they at first seem to be separate from society. Their very value, however, lies in the appearance that they are set apart and are different. Their purpose is to be an opposite to modern society.

Roderick Nash provides a similar idea of wilderness giving American civilization meaning by providing an opposite in *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Nash argues that "with the idea of wilderness [Americans] sought to give their civilization identity and meaning."⁹⁴ Wilderness is a historic concept: wilderness is not something that just exists, that is just out there and has always been out there. Rather, there is a history of ideas that Western civilization has held about wilderness, and these ideas have changed over time. Nash traces the genealogy of the idea of wilderness back through its European, Judeo-Christian, and ancient roots. In ancient times, wilderness was "the unknown, the disordered, the dangerous."⁹⁵ Wilderness was the

repository of monsters, demons, and evil. It was, in effect, everything that civilization was not. But later, as Americans became more modernized and began to be nostalgic about lost wilderness, wilderness switched from bad to good. Inner cities became reviled as wilderness had been, and the wilderness became a repository of spiritual truth.⁹⁶ Ideas about wilderness and civilization changed reciprocally. Somewhere in the middle of this attitude reversal, Yellowstone National Park was created.

In this way, Nash's analysis of texts from the time of Yellowstone's creation and my analysis of images in advertisements soon after Yellowstone's creation yield similar conclusions. Like Nash, I repeatedly return to the idea that Yellowstone National Park, a wilderness that Congress created by not allowing certain kinds of development there, is a foil against which Americans define American civilization. Wilderness becomes all that civilization is not. The myth of wilderness existed before Yellowstone did. The Park was created in order to reify this myth, to bring into physical being a manifestation of the concept.

Thus I find, through the theme of bears as entertainers and the analogy of Yellowstone Park as a freak show, that in the Union Pacific brochures the Park and its bears and geysers have been tamed and now serve to entertain Americans. Bears, and by extension, Native Americans, have been transformed from savage dangerous beasts into cute, cuddly entertainers. A boundary is crossed between human and animal, which raises both anxiety and curiosity, but the anxiety is calmed by taming the bears into a safe spectacle and by depicting them in traditional gender roles and by ignoring issues of class. Yellowstone Park, as a tourist destination and as a wilderness area, serves as a foil, a place American tourists can visit to define themselves.

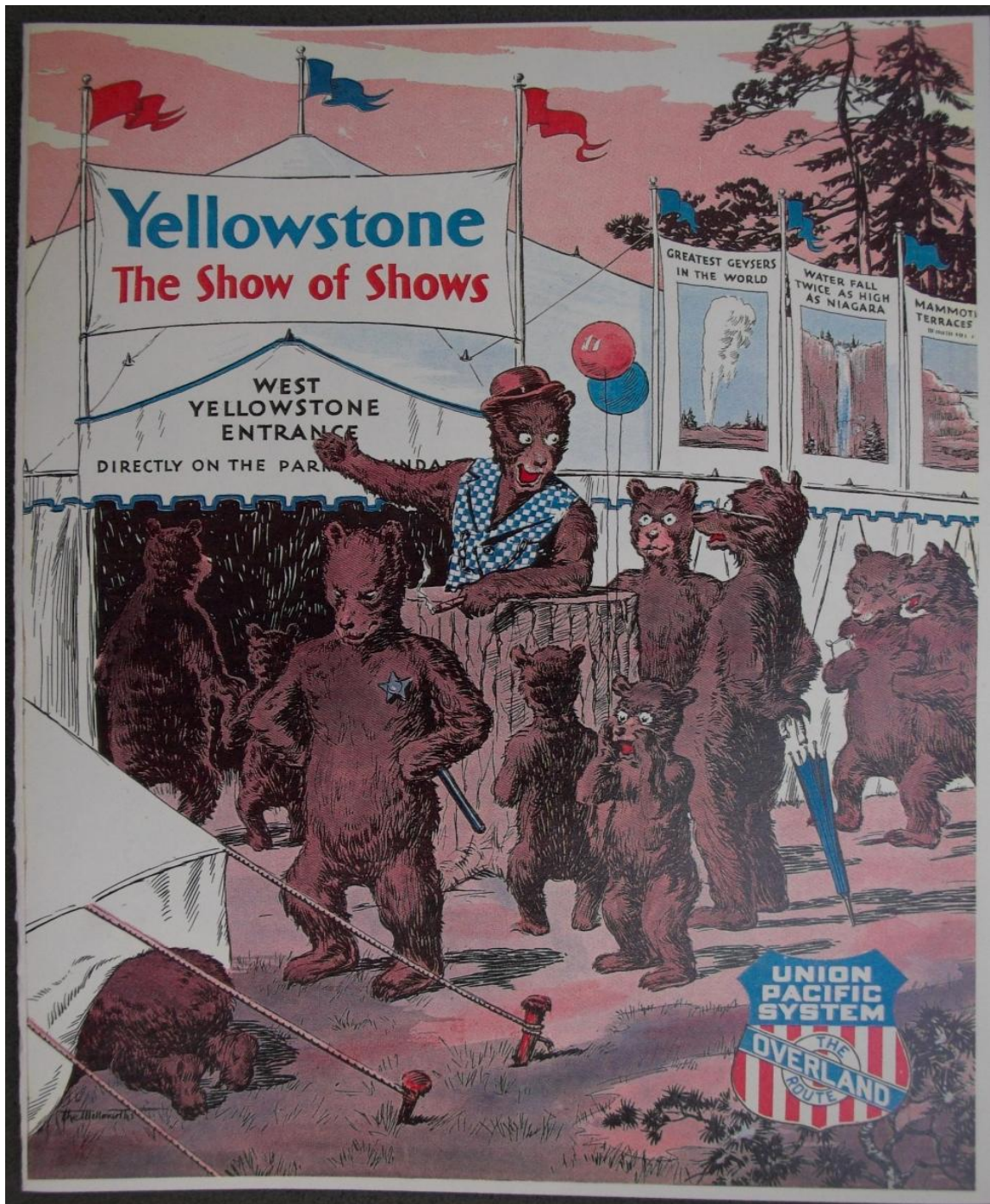


Figure 3-1. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *Yellowstone the Show of Shows*. 1930. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

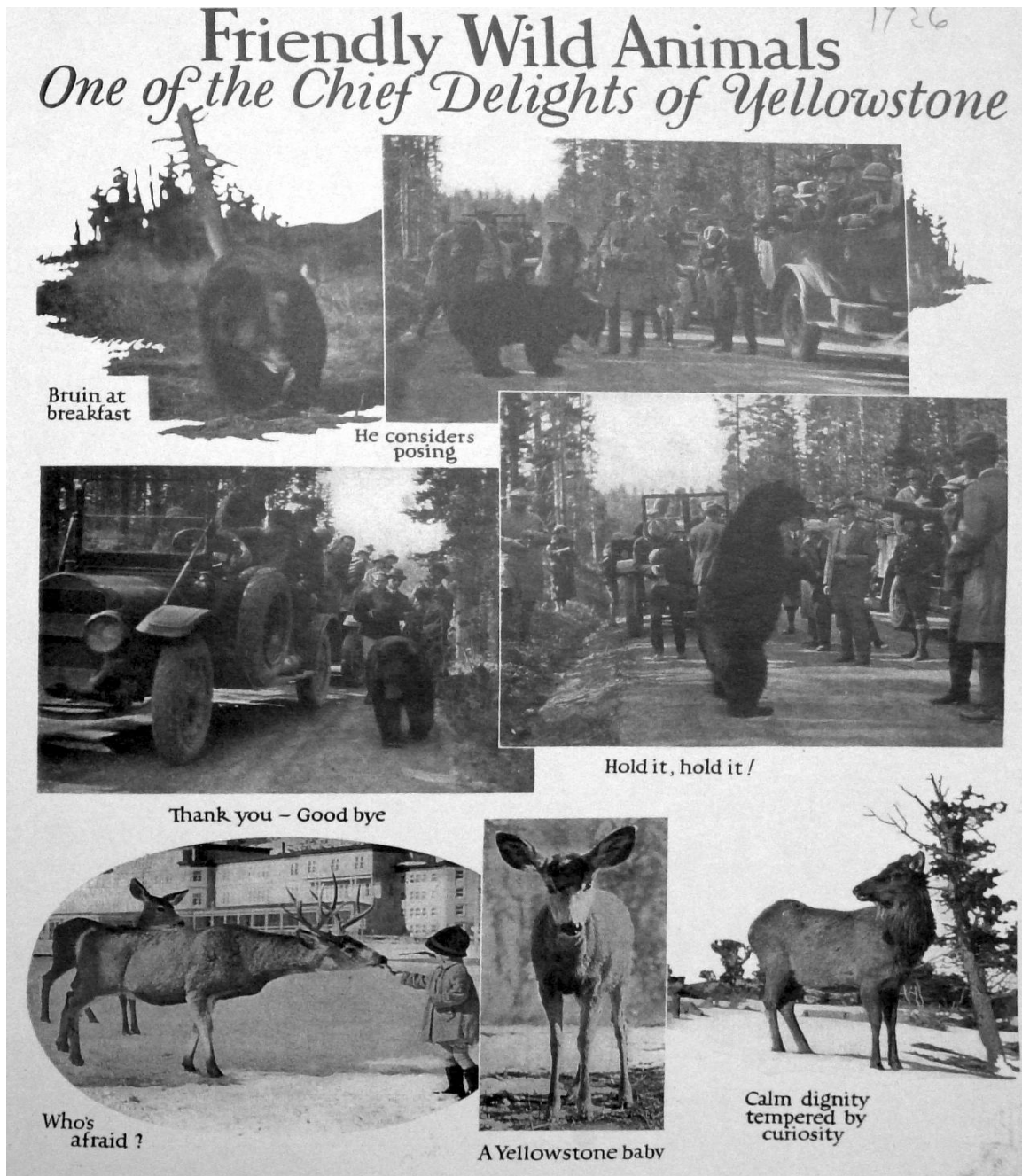


Figure 3-2. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *Don't Mean Maybe*. 1926. Inside detail. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

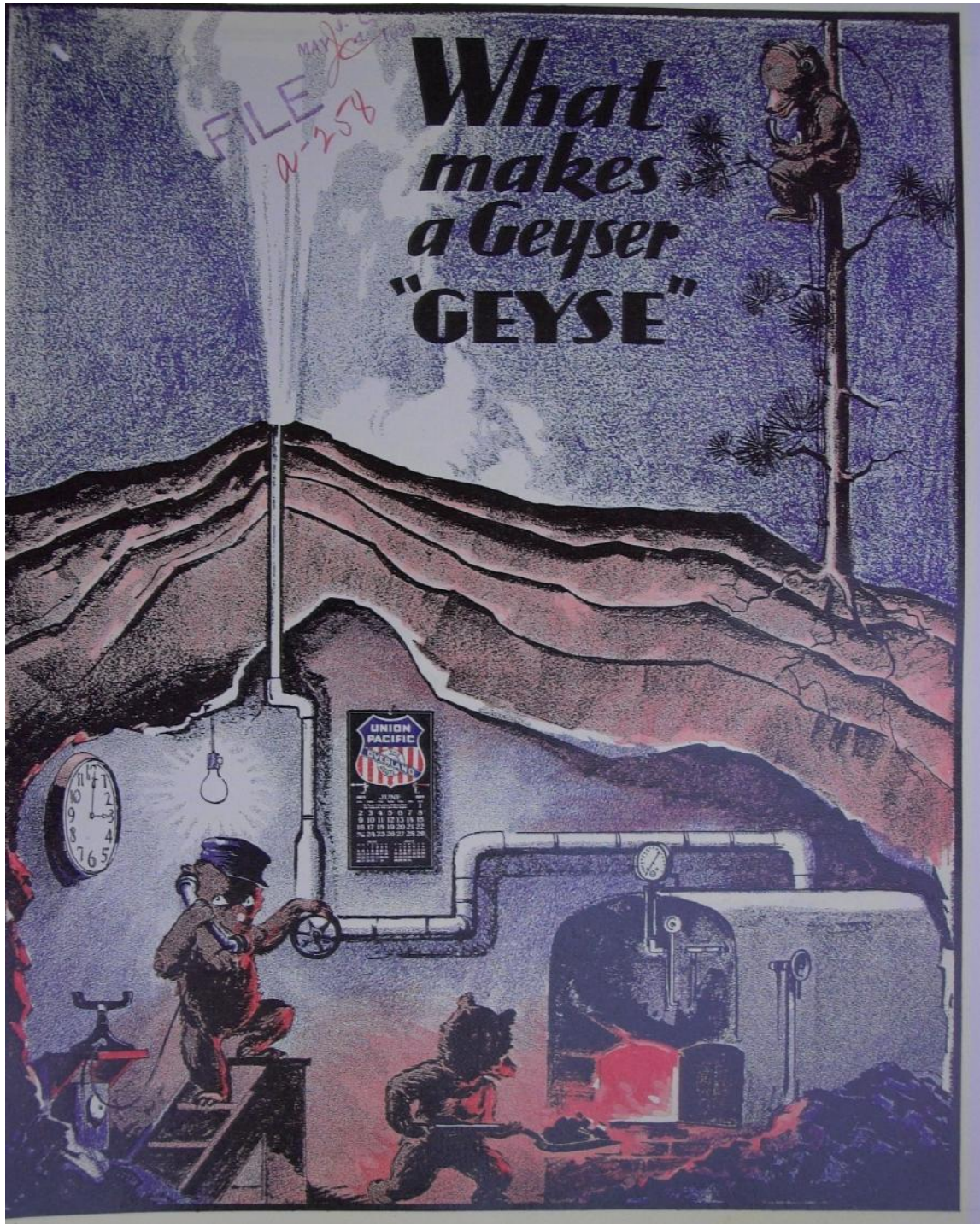


Figure 3-3. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *What Makes a Geyser "Geyse."* 1929. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

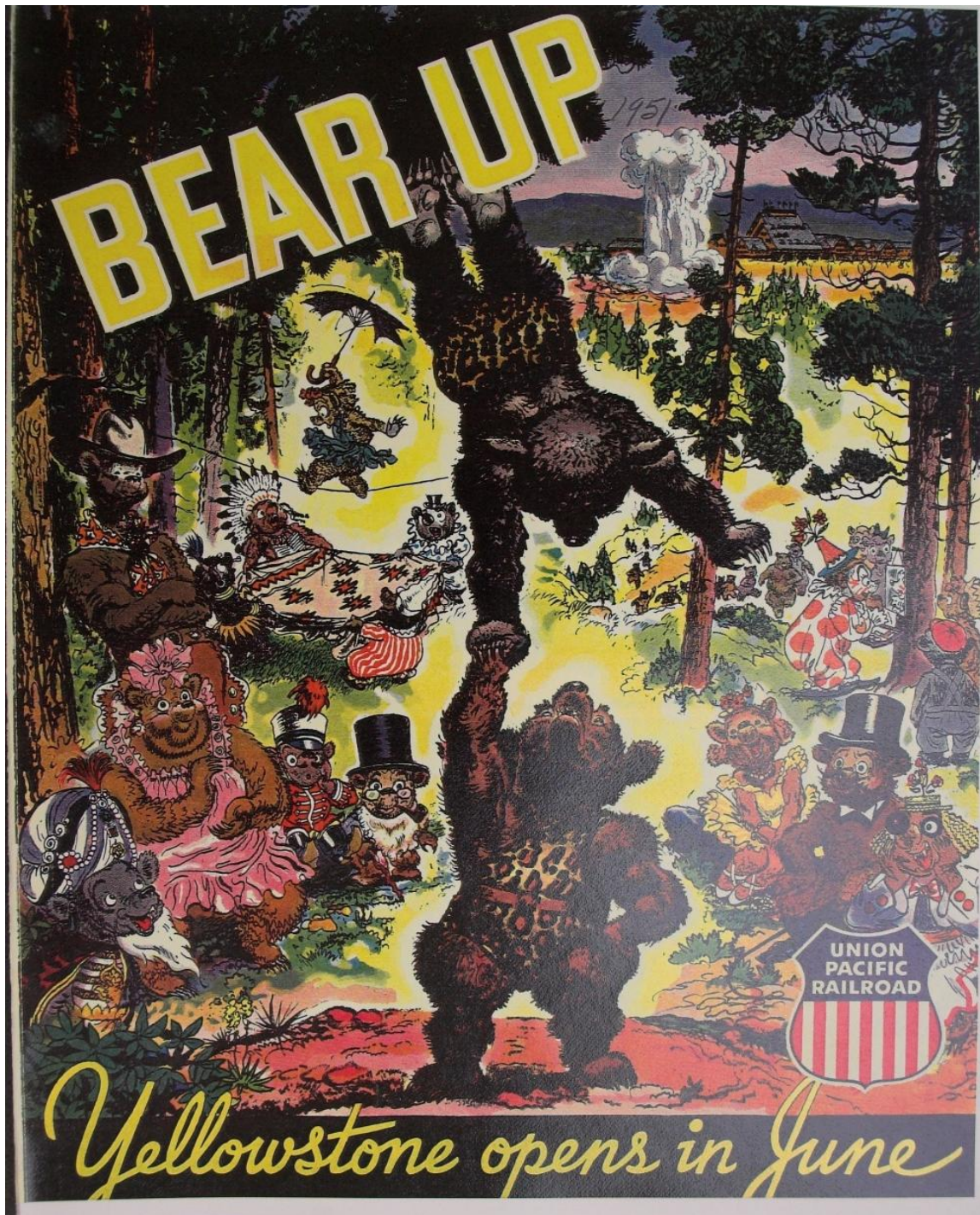


Figure 3-4. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *Bear Up Yellowstone Opens in June*. 1951. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.



Figure 3-5. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *A Twin Attraction Sell Both Yellowstone and Grand Teton via U.P.* 1957. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

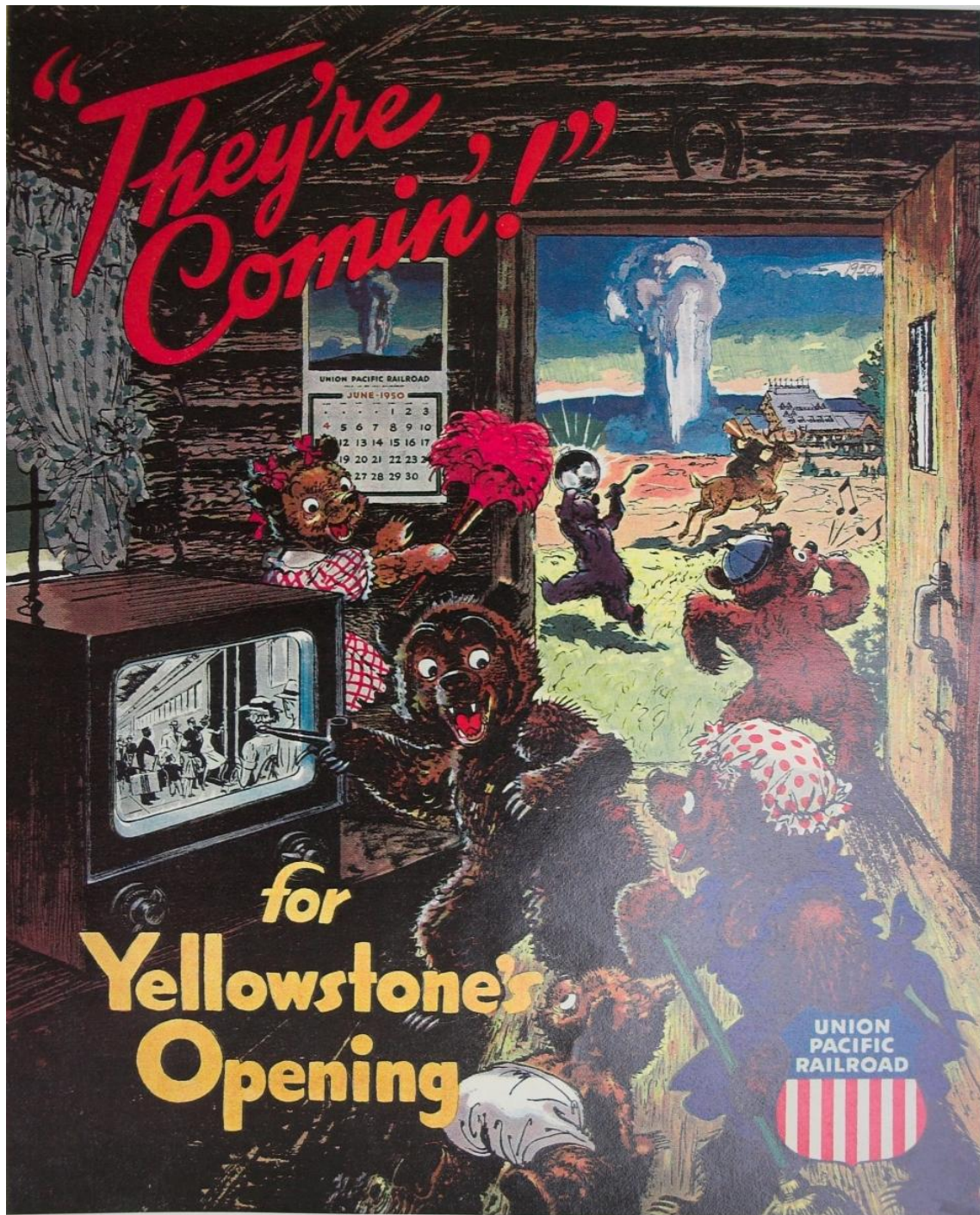


Figure 3-6. Union Pacific Railroad Company. *They're Comin'! For Yellowstone's Opening*. 1950. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHANGING IDEAS ABOUT YELLOWSTONE

Clearly, a study of visual representations of Yellowstone National Park, especially railroad promotional materials and other ephemera, can contribute to our knowledge of the phenomenon of Yellowstone National Park and what it means in Euro-American culture. Northern Pacific and Union Pacific railroad promotional imagery is rich in its evocation of mythology and ideology about Yellowstone. A gap has been left by historians and art historians in their ignoring this material. Visual images are historical documents in and of themselves and should not be relegated to mere decorations alongside analysis of written texts, and “low art” like railroad advertising can tell us just as much as “high art” like Thomas Moran’s paintings. Yellowstone’s images need to be examined in both the context of the American West and in the specific context of Yellowstone’s particular environment.

Both sets of railroad imagery refer to Yellowstone as an unusual place, a wonder, a curiosity, and a freak show. The Northern Pacific *Wonderland* series emphasizes the geothermal and geological features, while the later Union Pacific series emphasizes wildlife. As a natural area that contains unnatural features and that seems to question the very laws of nature, Yellowstone attracts anxieties and mythology to itself. This anxiety is part of why tourists want to visit Yellowstone, because it is exciting and adventurous.

In the Northern Pacific imagery, gender is projected onto the landscape in order to portray the Park as a masculine wild land that resisted progress and civilization and was untouched by human hands. Female symbols of Progress and Civilization accentuate the difference between themselves and Yellowstone. In addition, Yellowstone is thought to have no industrial value; its value to elite Americans lies in the fact that it, like high art or like elite

Victorian female tourists, need not perform a function. Both sets of railroad brochures ignore Native Americans and pretend they never existed in Yellowstone, although history tells us otherwise. In this way, race, class, and gender are abstracted onto Yellowstone's landscapes to create layers of meaning.

In the Union Pacific imagery, bears, formerly dangerous beasts, are tamed into safe, cute entertainers, as in a freak show. The bears provide an analogy for Native Americans, who were similarly tamed. Anxiety is raised by crossing the boundary between animal and human, but then it is calmed by the upholding of traditional gender roles and patriarchy. Yellowstone provides a foil, a place that has been created so tourists can see wild untamed nature and can define themselves against it as modern and civilized.

The Northern Pacific and Union Pacific visions of Yellowstone chart a shift from a Yellowstone that resisted civilization to one that has been tamed, and from elitism to democracy. Today's concept of Yellowstone is yet again different, an ecological paradise, complete with all of its predators including re-introduced wolves, one of the few places left where nature exists purely on its own merit, and people can visit to learn about how nature operates. Clearly our ideas about Yellowstone National Park, and our representations of it, have changed and continue to change with the times.

REFERENCES CITED

- ¹Thornton Waite, *Yellowstone by Train: A History of Rail Travel to America's First National Park*. (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Inc., 2006), v-vi.
- ²Peirre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (In David H. Richter, *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007, 1398-1403)).
- ³For Moran see Peter Hassrick, *Drawn to Yellowstone: Artists in American's First National Park* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002), Joni Kinsey, *Thomas Moran's West: chromolithography, high art, and popular taste*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006) and many others. For Jackson, see Peter Bacon Hales, *William Henry Jackson and the transformation of the American landscape*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) and many others.
- ⁴See Joshua, Johns, "All Aboard!": *The Role of the Railroads in Protecting, Promoting, and Selling Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks*. (Masters thesis, Department of English, University of Virginia, August 1996), 23 for railroads, and Hassrick 38 for congress.
- ⁵Two artists are known for the Union Pacific brochures: Walter Oehrle and "The Willmarths," according to Lee Whittlesey in unpublished comments accompanying the copies of the brochures at the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center. Whittlesey attributes this finding to Don Snoddy, former Union Pacific Railroad archivist.
- ⁶Alfred Runte, "Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad." *California History*, 70, no. 1 (1991): 65.
- ⁷Runte, "Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad," 72.
- ⁸Kirby Lambert, "The Lure of the Parks." *The Magazine of Western History*, 46 no. 1 (1996): 47.
- ⁹Johns, 12 about Yosemite, 23 about Yellowstone.
- ¹⁰Johns, 30.
- ¹¹Johns, 33.
- ¹²Nash Smith, Henry, *Virgin Land: the American West as Symbol and Myth*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), vi.
- ¹³Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964), 23.
- ¹⁴Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." *Locating American Studies: the Evolution of a Discipline*. (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 79.

- ¹⁵ Lucy Maddox, *Locating American Studies*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), viii-ix.
- ¹⁶ Mark David Spence, "Crown of the Continent, Backbone of the World: the American Wilderness Ideal and Blackfeet Exclusion from Glacier National Park." *Environmental History*, 1 No. 3 (1996), 31.
- ¹⁷ Kuklick, 73.
- ¹⁸ Hales, 3-4.
- ¹⁹ Hales, 43
- ²⁰ Hales, 70.
- ²¹ Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 17.
- ²² Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 3rd ed.), 20 and 28.
- ²³ Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 38.
- ²⁴ Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 36.
- ²⁵ Joan Zenzen. *Promoting National Parks: Images of the West in the American Imagination*. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1997), 36.
- ²⁶ For railroads as a symbol of technology and progress, see Marx, 27.
- ²⁷ Alfred Runte, *Trains of Discovery*. (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1998).
- ²⁸ Runte, *Trains of Discovery*, 39.
- ²⁹ The five railroads were the Northern Pacific, the Union Pacific, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago & North Western, and the Milwaukee. See Thornton Waite. *Yellowstone by Train*. (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Inc, 2006).
- ³⁰ Waite, 29 and 55.
- ³¹ Montana State University Renne Library Special Collections has twenty of the *Wonderland* guidebooks bound in four volumes, and the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center has several including one that Renne Library doesn't have. The brochures were found in MSU Renne Library, the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center in Gardiner, WY, the Livingston Depot Museum, and the website <www.davidrumsey.com>. I know of twenty-one guidebooks and seven brochures. There are more, smaller, brochures, but the large foldout ones are the ones I used. See Appendix I. A CD set containing fourteen of the guidebooks is available to buy from <<http://www.sharinghistory.com>>.

³² Johns, 28.

³³ Anne McClintock, "Race, Cross-Dressing, and the Cult of Domesticity." In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. (New York, London: Routledge, 1995), 160.

³⁴ Nabokov, Peter and Loendorf, Lawrence, *Restoring a Presence: American Indians and Yellowstone National Park*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 128.

³⁵ Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*. (1883, Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center), 8.

³⁶ Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 51.

³⁷ Chris Magoc, *Yellowstone: the creation and selling of an American landscape, 1870-1903*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 147.

³⁸ Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*, 8.

³⁹ Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *A Romance of Wonderland*. (1889, Montana State University Renne Library Special Collections), 7.

⁴⁰ Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*, 9.

⁴¹ Nabokov and Loendorf, 162.

⁴² Nabokov and Loendorf, xii.

⁴³ Nabokov and Loendorf, xiv.

⁴⁴ Olin D. Wheeler, *Wonderland 1894*. Montana State University Renne Library, Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

⁴⁵ Wheeler, *Wonderland 1900* and *Wonderland 1903*.

⁴⁶ Wheeler, *Wonderland 1906*.

⁴⁷ Wheeler, *Wonderland 1905*.

⁴⁸ Magoc , 31.

⁴⁹ Runte, *Trains of Discovery*, 13.

⁵⁰ Runte, *Trains of Discovery*, 38-44.

- ⁵¹ Lee Whittlesey and Paul Schullery, *Myth and History in the Creation of Yellowstone National Park*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 29.
- ⁵² Aubrey Haines, *Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1974), 3, 17, and 19.
- ⁵³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Oxford University Press 2010, <http://www.oed.com/> [accessed November 18, 2010].
- ⁵⁴ Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*, 9.
- ⁵⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Oxford University Press 2010, <http://www.oed.com/> [accessed November 18, 2010].
- ⁵⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 16.
- ⁵⁷ Greenblatt, 19.
- ⁵⁸ Greenblatt, 20.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ see Krzysztof Pomian, *Collections and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).
- ⁶¹ Magoc, 96.
- ⁶² Pomian, 47.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ronald Giere, "the Skeptical Perspective: Science Without Laws of Nature." In F. Weinert, ed, *Laws of Nature: Essays on the Philosophical, Scientific, and Historical Dimensions*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 120-138.
- ⁶⁵ Pomian, 30.
- ⁶⁶ Pomian, 32.
- ⁶⁷ Johns, 28.
- ⁶⁸ Waite, 143-144.

- ⁶⁹ The Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center has color copies of all 92 of these brochures that are known to exist. These were made by Yellowstone Park historian Lee Whittlesey from the collection of the Union Pacific Railroad Archives in Omaha, Nebraska. See Appendix II.
- ⁷⁰ Paul Shepard and Barry Sanders, "Celebrations of the Bear." *The North American Review* 270 No. 3 (1985), 17-25.
- ⁷¹ Donna Varga, "Teddy's Bear and the Sociocultural Transfiguration of Savage Beasts Into Innocent Children, 1890-1920." *The Journal of American Culture* 32 No. 2 (2009), 98.
- ⁷² Joseph Barbara and William Hanna, *Yogi Bear – Episode 1*, 1961.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g8FLSGRYW0>> [accessed November 18, 2010].
- ⁷³ The ones with a fence are: Union Pacific Railroad Company, *51 6/10*, 1923, *Hail Hail-*, 1924, *Yellowstone Opens June 20*, 1929, and *Straight to the Gate*, 1936. The one with a jail cell for hibernating bears is *Yellowstone Opens June 20*, 1935.
- ⁷⁴ Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone*. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 7-17.
- ⁷⁵ Biel, 11-12
- ⁷⁶ Horace Albright, *Oh, Ranger!: a book about the national parks*. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co 1946, 4thed), 52.
- ⁷⁷ Biel, 1.
- ⁷⁸ Union Pacific Railroad Company, *On the Dot*, 1924, and *What makes a Geyser "Geyse,"* 1929, Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.
- ⁷⁹ James W. Cook, Jr. "Of Men, Missing Links, and Nondescripts: The Strange Career of P.T. Barnum's 'What Is It?' Exhibition." In Thomson, Rosemarie, ed. *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996), 149.
- ⁸⁰ Miriam Forman-Brunell, "Teaching American History with Teddy's Bear." *OAH Magazine of History* 15 No. 4 (2001):46-47.
- ⁸¹ Union Pacific Railroad Company, *Bear Up Yellowstone opens in June*, 1951, and *Parade of Stars*, 1953. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.
- ⁸² Biel, 8.
- ⁸³ Rosemarie Thomson, ed, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996), 1.

⁸⁴ Thomson, 4.

⁸⁵ Union Pacific Railroad Company, *Comp'ny's Coming*, 1924. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

⁸⁶ Varga, 99.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Varga, 98.

⁸⁹ Union Pacific Railroad Company, *Yellowstone the World's Greatest Spectacle Opens June 20th*, 1933. Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

⁹⁰ Paul Schullery, *The Bears of Yellowstone*. (Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart, Inc. Publishers, 1986), 21.

⁹¹ Schullery, 23 and 26.

⁹² Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 5.

⁹³ MacCannell, 84.

⁹⁴ Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness & The American Mind*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), xi.

⁹⁵ Nash, xii.

⁹⁶ Nash, 156.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NORTHERN PACIFIC BROCHURES

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *Alice's Adventures in the New Wonderland*. 1883, Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *A Romance of Wonderland*. 1889, Montana State University Renne Library Special Collections.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *The Northern Pacific Railroad: the Yellowstone Park Route*. 1893, Montana State University Renne Library Special Collections.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *The Yellowstone National Park Puget Sound and Alaska*. 1896, Livingston Depot Foundation.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *The Yellowstone National Park via Northern Pacific Railway*. 1898, <www.davidrumsey.com>.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *Yellowstone National Park*. 1901, Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

Northern Pacific Railroad Company. *Yellowstone National Park Burlington route*. 1910, <www.davidrumsey.com>.

APPENDIX B

NORTHERN PACIFIC GUIDEBOOKS

Olin D. Wheeler. *The Wonderland of the World*. 1884, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Northern Pacific R.R. the Wonderland route to the Pacific Coast*. 1885, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland*. 1886, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland*. 1888, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *A Journey thro['] Wonderland*. 1890, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *A Ramble in Wonderland*. 1891, Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

Olin D. Wheeler. *A Ramble through Wonderland*. 1892, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *6,000 Miles Through Wonderland*. 1893, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Indianland and Wonderland*. 1894, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Sketches of Wonderland*. 1895, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland '96*. 1896, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland-97*. 1897, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 98*. 1898, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland '99*. 1899, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1900*. 1900, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1901*. 1901, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1902*. 1902, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1903*. 1903, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1904*. 1904, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1905*. 1905, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

Olin D. Wheeler. *Wonderland 1906*. 1906, Montana State University Renne Library Merrill C. Burlingame Special Collections.

APPENDIX C

UNION PACIFIC BROCHURES

All Lined Up for 1923, 1923

Yoo-Hoo C'mon Over!, 1923

51 6/10, 1923

Some Points to Remember, 1923

On the Dot, 1924

Comp'ny's Coming, 1924

Full Swing, 1924

Big Days, 1924

Hail Hail-, 1924

Vacation Time Approaches, 1924

At Home after June 18th West Yellowstone, 1925

Bears Out-, 1925

Coming Via West Yellowstone, 1925

Pulling Strong, 1925

A Word to the Wise, 1925

Don't Mean Maybe, 1926

School's Out Soon, 1926

A Winning Hand, 1926

America the Beautiful, 1926

A Yellowstone Champion, 1926

Yellowstone Opens June 19, 1927

A Bee Line to Yellowstone, 1927

In the Swim, 1927

A Yellowstone Rehearsal, 1928

Bully Times in Yellowstone, 1928

Yellowstone, 1928

What makes a Geyser "Geyse," 1929
To Our Newest National Park-, 1929
Reached Via Union Pacific, 1929
A Change in the Boundary of Yellowstone Park, 1929
Yellowstone Opens June 20, 1929
Uncle Sam Invites Everybody, 1930
Happy Days are Here Again, 1930
Yellowstone is Full of Surprises, 1930
Yellowstone The Show of Shows, 1930
Vacation Bargain Sale, 1931
Bears Inspection, 1931
A Lesson in Geography, 1931
A Winner, 1932
Yellowstone Opens June 20TH, 1932
Vacation Bargain Sale 3 for 1, 1932
Our Platform, 1932
Yellowstone Special, 1933
Yellowstone the World's Greatest Spectacle Opens June 20TH, 1933
A Vacation Hit, 1933
Yellowstone Solves the Vacation Puzzle, 1933
Nature's Greatest Exposition Yellowstone, 1934
A Varied Menu In Yellowstone, 1934
Yellowstone Opens June 20TH, 1934
Big Vacation News, 1934
Yellowstone – an Ideal "Location," 1935
Yellowstone Opens June 20, 1935

The Magic of Yellowstone, 1935
Yellowstone A Tenstrike, 1935
Yellowstone Opens June 20, 1936
Yellowstone Tops 'Em All, 1936
Straight to the Gate, 1936
Yellowstone Rings the Bell, 1936
Yellowstone Opens June 20, 1937
Yellowstone Full of Surprises, 1937
Yellowstone Nature's Finest Playground, 1937
Yellowstone Scores Again, 1937
A Sure Cure Yellowstone, 1938
Yellowstone Open for Inspection [sic] June 20, 1938
All Trails Lead to Yellowstone, 1938
Yellowstone See the Big Show Yellowstone National Park, 1939
Yellowstone Presents a Review of the Beauties of Nature, 1939
Yellowstone 1940 Edition, 1940
The "Swing" is to Yellowstone, 1940
Yellowstone All Clear, 1942
Yellowstone Welcome Back, 1946
The Best Approach is West Yellowstone, 1946
Hear Ye! Hear Ye!, 1947
Spot News, 1948
The People's Choice, 1948
Wake Up!, 1949
Safe!, 1949
Bear Up, 1951

Western Tours Trading Post, 1952

Our Platform...More Fun for Everyone!, 1952

Parade of Stars, 1953

Yellowstone Tops 'Em All, 1954

Pointing to a New High in Visitors to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, 1955

June 1956 Will Bear Watching, 1956

A Twin Attraction, 1957

Yellowstone Plus Grand Tetons Big Combination Sale, 1958

Next Door Neighbors! Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, 1959

West's Most Popular Ticket, 1960