

*Northern Pacific Railway Advertising brochure, 1938. WILLIAM HOY COLLECTION*



*President Calvin Coolidge and party visit the Park. YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK HERITAGE AND RESEARCH CENTER.*

## Chapter Nine

*President Calvin and Mrs. Coolidge visit. A woman loses her dress. Albright is head of the National Park Service. An elegant train runs to the coast. The CCC is here. President Franklin and Mrs. Roosevelt visit. The Northern Pacific is absorbed. Trains to the Park stop service.*

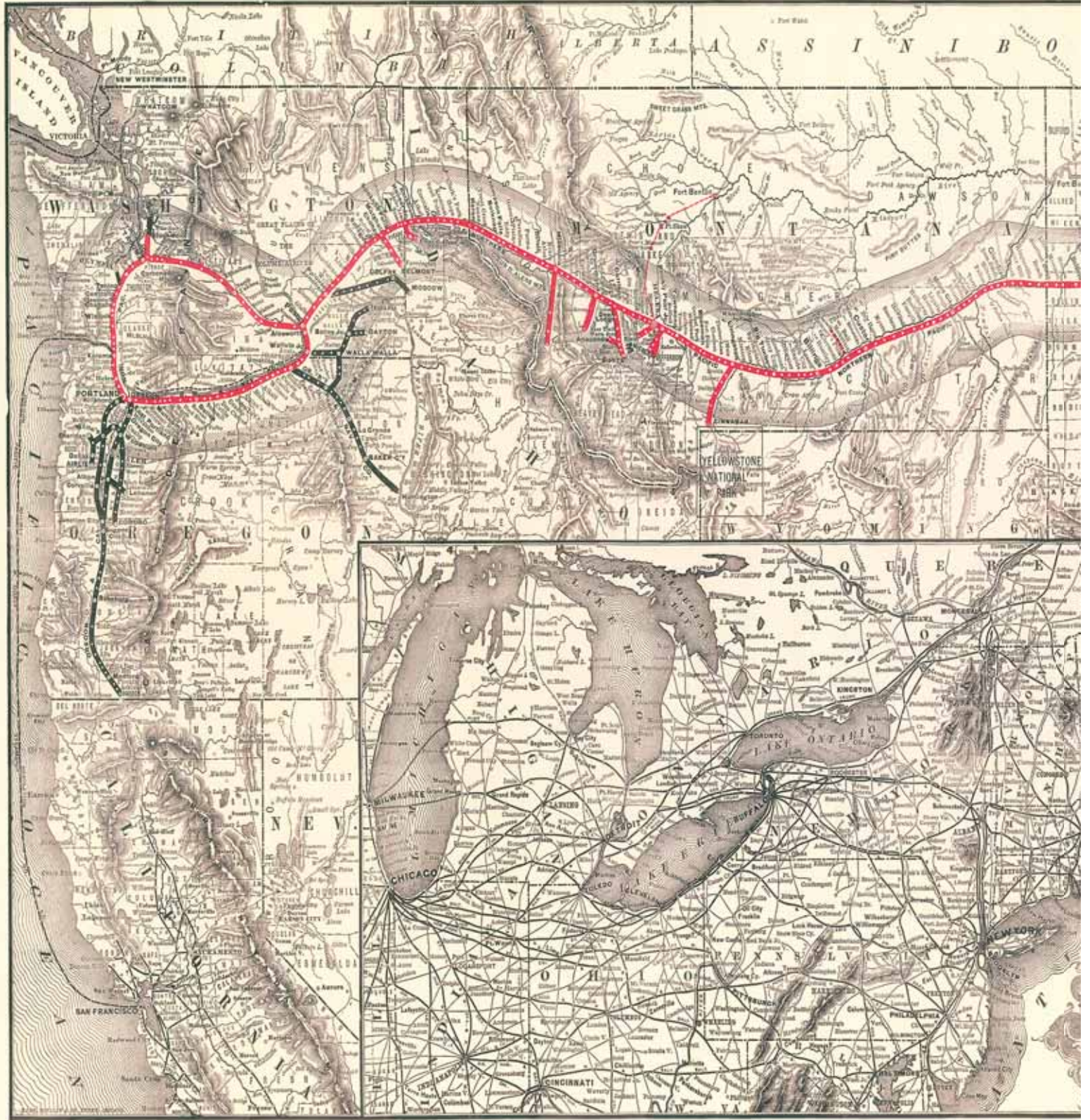
Despite the increased auto traffic to the Park, 44,786 visitors rode the trains in 1925 to entrances to the Park. It was a still profitable business. It would not be long, however, before the railroads would begin to lose money on their ventures.

The Northern Pacific Railroad welcomed another visit from a dignitary, knowing that such events brought more railroad passengers. During the summer of 1927, President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge paid a visit to Yellowstone National Park. They had spent several weeks in South Dakota's Black Hills where the President fished with worms as bait. Park Superintendent Albright was concerned about a presidential visit for two reasons. One, fishing with worms was not acceptable in the Park and, two, it was raining and had been raining for some time. Albright was amazed to see clear skies as the presidential party arrived. The President enjoyed his fishing - without worms. When the Coolidge party left, the skies clouded over and the rains started again.

The feeding of bears in the Park by visitors continued to be a problem. On one occasion, an irate woman phoned Albright's office from Canyon Lodge to demand that a black bear in that area be killed at once. She was feeding the bear- it was standing on its hind legs- in front of a crowd of other visitors snapping her photograph. She stepped back for a moment and the bear, thinking that the treats were over, dropped down on four paws. In so doing, however, his claws caught on the straps of the woman's dress and ripped it off her body. Upon investigation, it was learned that the humiliated woman was not injured and the bear was allowed to go on his way.

In 1928 in Washington Stephen Mather, head of the National Park Service, suffered a serious stroke. Park Superintendent

# The Yellowstone National Park and Dining



Northern Pacific Railway. MAP FROM MAPS OF THE PAST INC WWW.HISTORICMAPRESTORED.COM



Horace Albright seemed the logical choice to replace Mather and by January 1929, Albright had left the Park and was in Washington to take charge; he served in that post until 1933.

A luxurious Northern Pacific passenger train ran from St. Paul to Puget Sound for seventy-one years and one day. The North Coast Limited started as a summer tourist train running from St. Paul to Seattle on April 29, 1900. It was so successful that in two years the line ran year-round. It featured outstanding dining facilities. The train westbound was called Number One and the line eastbound was Number Two. By 1909, the train also ran to Portland and Spokane; two years later, passengers could also board the train at Chicago for a two-day journey to the West Coast.

By 1930, facilities for the North Coast Limited had become even more elegant, with barber and valet services, separate showers for men and women, a soda fountain, and radio service. Parlor cars were added for daylight viewing of the sights as the train went by. Seven years later, air conditioning was a regular feature. By 1948, stewardesses were employed by the line; these women were registered nurses as well. Dining was even more splendid with snowy white tablecloths and fresh flowers daily. Potatoes grown in the Gallatin Valley were brought aboard as a delicacy. Outside, the railroad cars were painted in two shades of green. Dome cars became a further attraction in 1954.

During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps was a strong presence in the Park, with camps at Mammoth Hot Springs, Old Faithful, Canyon, and Lake. Another camp near the Lamar River was called "Little America." More than six hundred of these young men worked on the trails, the bridges, and the walkways. They cleaned up dumps and tidied roadbeds. They worked with fire protection, landscaping, and insect control. They built boat docks at Yellowstone Lake.

In the nearby Montana communities, citizens were concerned about these young men with good reason. The first groups came from the slums of New York and, initially, brought their wild ways to the

Northern Pacific Station and Gardner Arch, beginning of the dramatic Civilian-Corps tour of Yellowstone.

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*Northern Pacific Ad.* WILLIAM HOY COLLECTION



*President Franklin D. Roosevelt has a happy visit with members of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1937.* YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK HERITAGE AND RESEARCH CENTER.



*Enjoying a joke! Stewardesses and train men from the North Coast Limited luxury cars on a field trip to Gardiner in 1961, to learn about Yellowstone Park in order that they could acquaint passengers passing through. L-R: Ron Latimore, Janet Sparks, Sally Omar, Karen Walt, Walt Widdenhoffer (leaning on front seat). Kneeling at right, Bill Briscoe had married Elizabeth Ramsey; they lived in Livingston for a time. PHOTO, RON BEAUMONT*

Park. A few serious troublemakers had to be discharged and sent away. But, as writer Richard A. Bartlett noted, "What is remarkable is not the existence of a discipline problem, which was expected, but the rapidity with which it was solved."<sup>80</sup> Most adjusted to western ways and behaved themselves. Later contingents came from Ohio and Indiana and had less trouble adjusting to Park rules.

When President and Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to visit the Park in late September 1937, the CCC members stood at attention as the party passed by. The Roosevelts saw many bears as they went along. Eleanor Roosevelt quipped that she was looking for Teddy Roosevelt's laundry that he lost in one of the geysers years before. As the CCC disbanded, their camps

were used for other purposes.

By the late 1940s, automobile traffic to the Park had increased to such an extent that the railroads began to lose money. By 1948, regular passenger trains from Livingston to Gardiner no longer operated, although special trains came through. On August 31 and September 1, 1955, the last trains came through filled with Girl Scouts. The unusual Livingston Depot continued as a depot until 1979 when Amtrak<sup>81</sup> stopped its passenger service along the former Northern Pacific line. The railroad donated the building to the City of Livingston in 1985. After two years of renovation costing \$800,000, the Livingston Depot Center opened to the public again, this time as a museum.

In 1954, Robert Reamer's singular depot

<sup>80</sup> Richard A. Bartlett, *Yellowstone, A Wilderness Besieged*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1985: 301

<sup>81</sup> The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) formed on May 1, 1971.



*Gardiner Station, train #217, July 16, 1941.* WARREN MCGEE PHOTO



*Gardiner photo taken in 2004.* WILLIAM HOY PHOTO



*Roosevelt Arch and stone column marking YNP boundary, 2004.* WILLIAM HOY PHOTO

at Gardiner was torn down and replaced with a less interesting building, but one that would accommodate freight traffic only.<sup>82</sup>

Northwest of the Park, the Milwaukee Road sold the elegant Gallatin Gateway Inn in 1951 to Paul L. Hostenstien of Butte. In 1959, the Union Pacific stopped service to West Yellowstone. Two years later, the Milwaukee Road ended its passenger service to the area. At the eastern entrance to the Park, the service from Cody stopped in 1956, which resulted in the closure of the Burlington Inn.

In 1970, the Burlington Northern Railroad absorbed the Northern Pacific Railway, thus ending a long and notable presence in the northwestern states.

The Northern Pacific influenced the development of Yellowstone National Park in a number of ways. The company built a line from Livingston that eventually reached the Park border and attracted visitors to the area. The railroad paid for hotels to be erected at various locations throughout the Park that brought well-heeled visitors for overnight stays. The line hired the services of a number of talented individuals to work in the Park – the photographer F. Jay Haynes, the architect Robert Reamer, artist Thomas Moran. The railroad helped with getting dude ranches started around the Park borders that brought in visitors. Early touring buses also received the benefit of railroad money.

A few plans initiated by the Northern Pacific were not successful, fortunately. One was the attempt to build a railroad through the Park to the Lamar Valley and up to Cooke City. A number of Yellowstone supporters managed to stop such a line even though it had public support at the time. Other attempts to run lines within Park limits in the 1880s were thwarted also. Looking back, however, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Northern Pacific Railroad had a positive effect on the early development of Yellowstone National Park.

<sup>82</sup> In 1975, the tracks from Livingston to Gardiner were torn up and hauled away.