Full Summary

Since its establishment in 1872, Yellowstone park has had over 150 million visitors. Each one of these visitors had their own unique experience, some leaving with treasured memories and maybe some pictures. While it may just be a quick car ride away nowadays, travelling the park before automobiles became a common part of American life was a very different experience. The Special Collections at MSU has a handful of journals and photos from these early tourists, documenting their travels. Some of the more thorough accounts have been selected to be featured in this map, documenting their travels in the park. Some of the accounts featured here include the journal of Henry F. Keyes, a young Harvard student who traveled through in 1899, hiking much of the park, until an injury cut his visit short, or Charles Hoff, who rode through in a wagon with his brother and family in September of 1908. All of these accounts remark on the natural beauty of the park and its unique thermal features. To the right are links to a collection of Yellowstone park papers and journals as well as links to the specific journals used in this map.

Keyes summary

In the Summer of 1899, Henry Keyes and twelve other Harvard students went on an expedition sponsored by the Harvard Summer School of Geology to visit and explore Yellowstone Park. Setting out from Buffalo New York on July 4, they traveled across the country, entering the park almost a month later, on August 2. They entered the park from the west, following the Madison into the Upper Geyser Basin. From there, they turned south and hiked through the basin admiring the various thermal features along the way. On August 5, Keyes burnt his foot somewhere near Old Faithful and was unable to continue for some time. After recovering well enough to travel, He began his return journey riding coaches through the rest of the park, stopping at the Lake Hotel and Canyon Hotel on his way out. He left through the north entrance of the park on August 13 to begin his long trip back to the east coast.

Hoff summary

In 1908 Charles Hoff set off on a wagon trip with some friends and family from Boulder Wyoming. They rode north following several rivers through Wyoming, making it to the southern entrance of the Park on September 4,1908. They continued north through the park, making their way past Yellowstone Lake and the Yellowstone river almost all the way to the northern border of the park. Along the way Hoff describes the landmarks and sights, some in great detail. From Tower falls, they turned towards mammoth springs. During a layover in Mammoth Henry, Charles’ brother, took their horses to Gardner to get them shod before moving south. The group made it all the way to Old Faithful, often traveling though rain and snow, before backtracking to modern day Madison junction and leaving through the western entrance of the park.

Keys summary summary

A young Harvard student documents his travels from the east coast to Yellowstone. While there he records the sights from the western entrance through the geyser basin. His journey was cut short due to an injury near Old Faithful, but he still saw a good portion of the park on his trip out, travelling first to Yellowstone lake, then up to the Canyon Hotel, eventually leaving through the north entrance near Mammoth Springs.

Hoff summary summary

Charles Hoff set off on a wagon trip in 1908 with friends and family to see Yellowstone Park. They left from near Boulder Wyoming, making it to the park on September 4, 1908. They came in through the southern entrance and made their way north, circling around to see Tower Falls, Mammoth Springs, and the Geyser Basins, eventually leaving through the western entrance before going home.