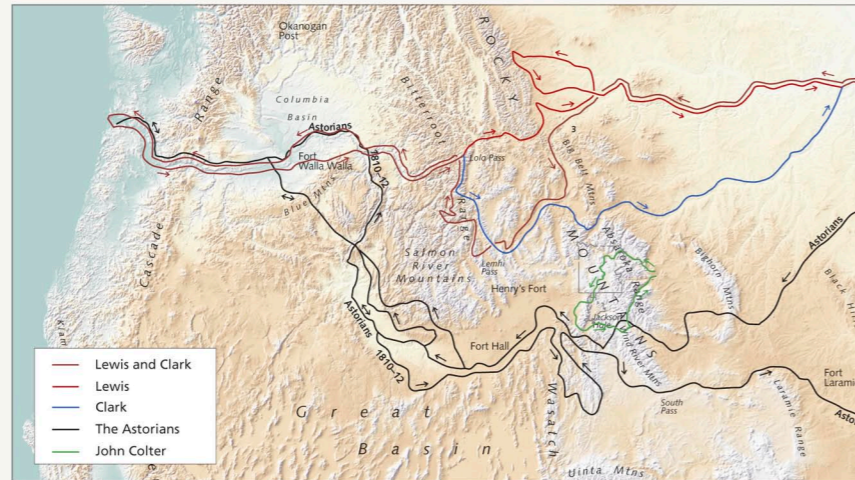


Exploration: 1806-1872

First Euro-American Contact 1806-1813

The first known Euroamericans to enter the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem were U.S. citizens under the command of Captain William Clark, heading homeward from their journey to the mouth of the Columbia River. Traveling eastward, they traveled up the Gallatin Valley, across Bozeman Pass, and down the Yellowstone River to the Missouri, approaching within about 50 miles of present day Yellowstone National Park. Party member John Colter returned to the region in 1807 through 1808, becoming the first known white man to enter the park area and witness its geothermal features. In 1811 and 1812, members of the fur trading Astorians passed along the southern edge of the ecosystem on westward and eastward journeys to and from Oregon. The Astorians or Colter may have been the first whites to sight the Teton Range.



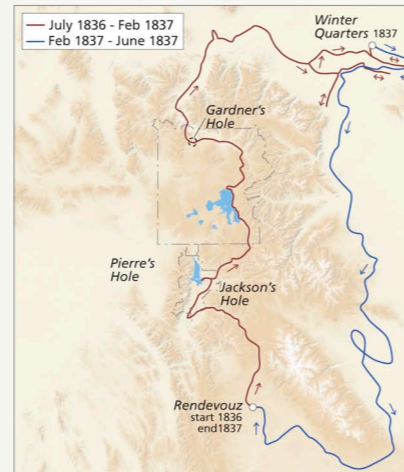
Journeys of a Trapper 1835-1840

Osborne Russell, a literate Maine-born trapper, traveled extensively through the northern Rocky Mountains in the closing years of the fur trade. Repeatedly crisscrossing the region in and around Yellowstone, Russell traveled with or encountered some of the best-known professional trappers and traders, including Jim Bridger and Nathaniel Wyeth. His journal provides essential background on life in the fur trade - from the incredible perils that were a matter of daily routine to the incredible demands of the trapper's work.

Russell's journal also documents dramatic and even violent encounters with Native Americans. Despite this, he never failed to leave telling and even sympathetic portrayals of these long-time residents. His 1835 report on Sheepeater Indians living in the Lamar Valley is a thoughtful account of these native people who, though obviously prospering, would for many years be misportrayed as a stunted and miserable race.

A careful and keen observer of the natural settings through which he traveled, Russell's accounts of geothermal features are significant, but his reports on wildlife are irreplaceable. His observations of wild animals in specific settings throughout the Yellowstone Ecosystem offer modern environmental scholars a priceless window on the ecological community of the Northern Rockies more than 170 years ago.

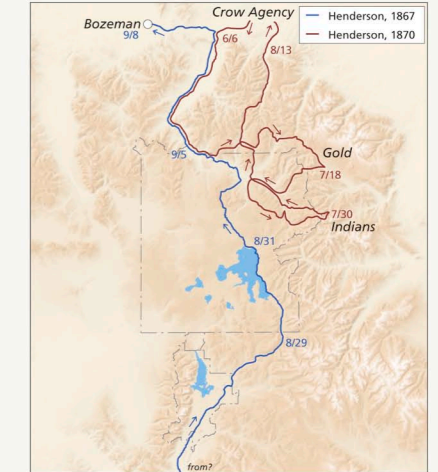
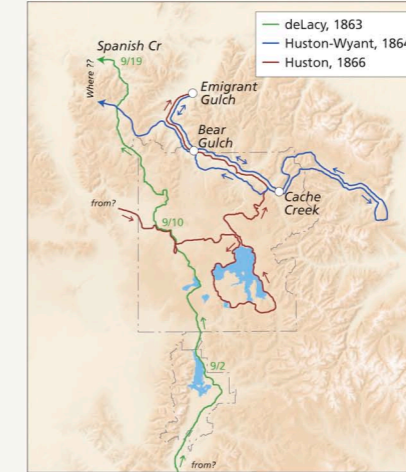
Russell's matter-of-fact accounts of a trapper's life, of native populations and brutal battles with them, of unforgiving risks of wilderness travel, and of sublime revelations regarding the beauty of the western landscape still bring that long-lost era to vivid life for modern readers and make his journal the first enduring classic of Yellowstone literature.



The Search for Gold 1860-1870

Gold strikes in Idaho and Montana brought prospectors to the region in the 1860s. The present-day park never yielded meaningful "color," but many prospectors passed through the area hunting for gold or traveling to more promising fields.

In 1863, Walter deLacy led a party of dozens of prospectors through Yellowstone, improving the cumulative map gradually being created by many such wanderers. Also in 1863 and subsequent years, prospectors George Huston and H.W. Wyant explored the northeastern and east-central portions of the present park, naming prominent landmarks and clarifying the area's geography. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, A. Bart Henderson routinely traveled the northeastern Yellowstone area, helping to pioneer the New World Mining District near the northeast entrance of the present day park.

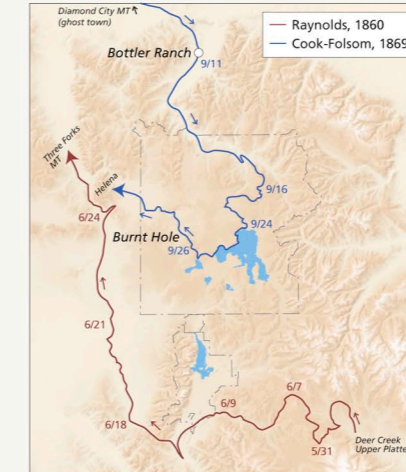


Exploration 1860-1870

The first official exploration party to Yellowstone since Lewis and Clark failed to penetrate the heart of the region. Captain William Reynolds directed an expedition that skirted the central ecosystem, but failed to reach the upper Yellowstone River because of deep snows.

Then in 1869, almost on a lark, Montanans David Folsom, Charles Cook, and William Peterson traveled to many of the most amazing features. Though their additions to the map were invaluable to later parties, many people doubted their stories.

It was left to the Washburn Party of 1870 to follow a similar route and bring back 'definitive knowledge' of Yellowstone. Thus, Euroamerican 'exploration' had been underway for more than 60 years before 'discovery' became official.



Surveys 1871-1872

On the heels of the Washburn party came Ferdinand Hayden and the U.S. Geological Survey, whose various teams had already mapped much of the American West's least-known regions. Hayden and U.S. Army engineers Barlow and Heap, following routes of many white predecessors, brought a scientific eye to the task of fleshing out the geographical mysteries of Yellowstone.

Yet for all their scientific achievements, the Hayden Survey's wisest move may have been including a photographer, William Henry Jackson, and an artist, Thomas Moran. Between them, Jackson and Moran brilliantly brought the Yellowstone landscape, with all its weirdness, wonder, and beauty, to visual life, settling once and for all any doubts about the existence of this amazing landscape, and persuading Congress that here, indeed, was a place worth saving.

