



Yellowstone National Park Archives
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National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

LEE WHITTLESEY YELLOWSTONE ORAL HISTORIES 1990s-2010s

CATALOG NUMBER: MSC 210

VOLUME: 0.2 LINEAR FEET

HISTORY

Lee H. Whittlesey worked in Yellowstone National Park for nearly 50 years. After a seasonal stint with the National Park Service (NPS), he joined the park concessioner Yellowstone Park Company and later TW Services, starting as a non-driving commentator (now known as a step-on guide) and rising to commentator trainer. In 1982, he moved back to the NPS, attending ranger school and earning a law enforcement commission, working as a seasonal ranger in 1983. He then attended law school at the University of Oklahoma. He returned to the park as a law enforcement ranger in 1988, stationed in West Yellowstone and serving during the 1988 fires. The same year he published his first book, *Yellowstone Place Names*. He then moved to interpretation, working as an interpretive ranger and writing *Death in Yellowstone* (1995). He began doing historical research projects, first for Paul Schullery documenting historical wildlife observations, then moving to a technical writer position, and finally becoming assistant historian to park historian Tom Tankersley. In 2000, Tankersley moved on and Whittlesey became the fourth park historian. His book *Storytelling in Yellowstone: Horse and Buggy Tour Guides* was published in 2007 and *Ho for Wonderland: Traveler's Accounts of Yellowstone* with Elizabeth Watry was published in 2009. Numerous other journal articles, monographs, and other writings were also produced (see the Yellowstone Research Library catalog for a more comprehensive list). Whittlesey retired from the NPS in 2018, although he continues to research, write, and publish on the history of Yellowstone National Park.

DESCRIPTION

Oral history interviews with Yellowstone National Park employees, concessioner employees, gateway community members, and family members conducted by Lee H. Whittlesey, park historian. The interviews cover a wide range of topics with a focus on the park's history, social life, and special events within the park.

PROVENANCE

Generated by the Historian's Office in the 1990s-2010s, see individual interviews for specific acquisition dates.

AVAILABILITY

This is an unprocessed collection. Material is available for access. The materials include legacy media formats, which are currently unavailable to access. Please contact us well in advance of any planned

research visit. Be advised that digitizing legacy media may take up to six months, depending on volume and format. Some records within the collection are under restrictions. Please contact the Heritage & Research Center (yell_heritage_center@nps.gov) for more information.